Marsha Meskimmon

CONTEMPORARY ART
AND THE COSMOPOLITAN IMAGINATION

Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination

Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination explores the role of art in conceiving and reconfiguring the political, ethical and social landscape of our time. Understanding art as a vital form of articulation, Marsha Meskimmon argues that artworks do more than simply reflect and represent the processes of transnational and transcultural exchange typical of the global economy. Rather, art can change the way we imagine, understand and engage with the world and with others very different from ourselves. In this sense, art participates in a critical dialogue between cosmopolitan imagination, embodied ethics and locational identity.

The development of a cosmopolitan imagination is crucial to engendering a global sense of ethical and political responsibility. By materialising concepts and meanings beyond the limits of a narrow individualism, art plays an important role in this development, enabling us to encounter difference, imagine change and make possible the new. This book asks what it means to inhabit a globalised world – how we might literally and figuratively make ourselves cosmopolitans, 'at home' everywhere. Contemporary art provides a space for this enquiry.

Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination is structured and written through four 'architectonic figurations' – foundation, threshold, passage and landing – which simultaneously reference the built environment and the transformative structure of knowledge-systems. It offers a challenging new direction in the current literature on cosmopolitanism, globalisation and art.

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Marsha Meskimmon

For my mother, my son and deep blue water

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Introduction

Contemporary art: at home in a global world

This book emerges from a conversation between fascination and paradox. Like many feminist scholars engaged with modern and contemporary art practice, my thinking has been affected profoundly by feminist philosophy, most especially by work on embodied subjectivity, situated knowledge, ethics and aesthetics. My commitment to feminism – intellectually, politically and personally – goes beyond a simple professional allegiance. It is more apt to say that I am fascinated by questions of sexual difference and their impact upon women's particular relationships to, and articulations of, knowledge, culture and meaning. This fascination has driven my research for more than two decades; through many and varied projects, I have sought to engage with the contingent, yet eloquent, interweaving of subjects, objects, spaces, materials and ideas that characterise the work of women making art.[1]

An upshot of my research, and my awareness of that of many other feminist scholars, has been a developing sensitivity to places where sexual difference is of critical significance to the production of meaning and yet not signified. For instance, the ubiquitous focus on 'the body' in art and theory during the 1990s was linked only peripherally with the feminist practices that so clearly determined its contours. In the context of the present volume, it is equally clear that the domestic – the materials, tropes, images and spaces associated with 'home' – occupies an important site within contemporary transnational art, yet the experimental work of feminist artists and scholars, from which it derives much of its force, is rarely acknowledged. While I am not suggesting that domesticity must be gendered feminine nor, indeed, approached only through a feminist trajectory or by women artists and scholars, there are definitive historical and conceptual links between women, the 'feminine' and the domestic that cannot be ignored in understanding the present predominance of this motif in contemporary art. More strongly, I would argue that feminist activist art practices (especially work from the 1960s and 1970s, not just in the dominant Euro–US centres, but on a truly international scale) brought attention to the materiality of domesticity, made it a focus for art/intervention, and enabled the more diverse practices that now delve into the question of home to be seen as 'worthy' of art making. Yet the complex questions around sexed

subjectivity and difference that are raised by contemporary art's turn toward the domestic are at best under-represented, and at worst obscured.

The complexities of contemporary art's 'domestic turn' have been useful, however, in enabling my fascination to converse with paradox. Fascinated by the way that these works could be concerned with the materials and spaces marked by sexual difference yet occlude, precisely, that marking, I was further struck by the fact that, paradoxically, the most nuanced explorations of the domestic in contemporary art tend to be found in work that is decidedly not 'local', work that has no intention of staying at home. That is, the domestic has become a central motif in practices that specifically seek to engage the transnational flows and cross-cultural exchanges that characterise globalisation. Three instances that arrested my attention at an early stage of this project serve well to begin the process of unravelling this ostensible paradox.

Between 1999 and 2000, the artist Do-Ho Suh initiated a series of architectural installations, fabricated variously from diaphanous nylon and silk, that would come to be known, together, as *The Perfect Home*. *Seoul Home/ L.A.Home/New York Home/Baltimore Home/London Home/Seattle Home* (1999) is a hand-sewn, green silk replica of the interior of Suh's childhood home in Korea, itself a reconstruction of a replica 'traditional' Korean domestic dwelling, salvaged by Suh's father from the grounds of a royal residence. The extended title refers first to the imagined childhood home ('Seoul Home'), and then to the home-as-art, installed in galleries across the USA and in London.

Similarly, *348 West 22nd St., Apt. A, New York, NY 10011 at Rodin Gallery, Seoul/Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery/Serpentine Gallery, London/ Biennale of Sydney/Seattle Art Museum* (2000) [colour plate 1] is a pale grey, sewn nylon replica interior of Suh's apartment in New York City, translated and transported through the metropolitan art world of the 21st century. *The Perfect Home* brought *Seoul Home* and *348 West 22nd St.* together, bridging the gap between the floating suspension of the former and the grounded installation of the latter by use of a rose-coloured corridor, a metaphorical passage between the homes of the past and the present, the dwelling spaces that construct the Korean-born, US-based artist as a transnational subject and a contemporary, international artist.

For over a decade, Zwelethu Mthethwa has photographed the inhabitants of provisional settlements on the outskirts of Cape Town. Coming to be known as the *Interior Portraits*, the untitled series of photographs reveals lives led in the marginal spaces of the new South Africa, territories hovering between affluent global metropoles and the residue of Apartheid. The residents' homes are both transitory and remarkably settled; flimsy walls are carefully papered with brightly-coloured advertising, makeshift furniture is covered by decorative textiles, or prized possessions, kept safe through many journeys, are arranged in temporary displays. The dwellings are clearly poor, but their

Figure 0.1 Do-Ho Suh, *Perfect Home* (2000)

inhabitants are not impoverished, not presented to us as objects to be pitied. Contemporary global citizens, if not elite world-travellers, the residents of Crossroads and similar settlements are active participants in the transnational and intercultural exchanges of globalisation.

Mthethwa's large-scale, colour images occupy a space at the nexus of photographic documentary, traditional portraiture and conceptual art that is, at the same time, a space produced by the interaction between the local and the global [colour plate 2]. The works record the tenuous conditions of economic migrancy while articulating subjectivity as a visual, material and spatial engagement between domesticity and transnational exchange. For instance, the green-patterned wallpaper forming the backdrop to the portrait of the quietly confident seated man in *Untitled* (1991) reads 'breeze'. Breeze is a well-known, eco-friendly brand of soap produced in India; in this image, the surfaces of global exchange connect in the most quotidian of spaces. Commodities and their adjunct advertising circulate in global networks such that the packaging of Indian soap covers the walls of itinerant workers' provisional homes in the new South Africa. Mthethwa's photographs then come to us, doubly inscribed within the political and economic circuits of globalisation; the interiors pictured in the works are formed by the self-same movement of commodities and

Figure 0.2 Zwelethu Mthethwa, *Untitled* (1991)

capital that propels the photographs through the contemporary art market in one-off international exhibitions and countless biennials.

Since 2000, Swedish artist Cecilia Parsberg has made work in some of the most contentious sites of inhabitation in the world: from Soweto and Cape Town to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Her work, often produced in collaborative modes with other artists, writers and scholars, seeks to foreground the experiences of those dwelling in contested territory and, as she put it, ' … how we connect ourselves here with what is happening there'.[2]

In *I Can See the House/For Rachel* (2003), Parsberg worked with Eric Pauser to produce two short video pieces commemorating Rachel Corrie, a US-born activist killed whilst demonstrating peacefully against Israeli demolition teams bulldozing the houses of Palestinians in the town of Rafah. Parsberg's work, and her web-based statements and information, centre on the activity of dwelling, of home-making, as a political practice as contentious, dangerous and subversive as any other public form of protest [colour plate 3]. Moreover, the work makes clear that, in a world simultaneously defined by the concept of the nation-state and yet over-run by global corporate and political interests,

such sites of politicised dwelling are everyone's concern – these homes seek a global ethical response.

At first glance, the three works described above bear little resemblance to one another. With very different formal and material concerns, they address geographically-distinct experiences of 'home', refusing simplistic origin myths and their corollary constructions of 'authentic' identity. But while these works do not share a unified representational strategy or singular origin point, they all engage productively with the processes and practices of inhabiting a global world, they all constitute a form of 'being at home' that is simultaneously marked by movement, change and multiplicity. In this way, they participate in a critical dialogue between ethical responsibility, locational identity and what I would call 'cosmopolitan imagination'.

This book is centred upon that critical dialogue and argues that the insights of feminist theory into ethics, aesthetics and subjectivity are crucial to exploring art as a full participant in the conversation. Where a fascination with the unmarked territories of sexual difference meets the paradox of 'being at home' in an all-too-marked zone of globalisation, we find the present volume's contribution to the debate. And, in a simple sense, the concerns of this book can be characterised as three interwoven questions.

First, what role does art play in conceiving and reconfiguring the political, ethical and social landscape of our time? Embedded within this question is my

Figure 0.3 Cecilia Parsberg and Eric Pauser, still from *I Can See the House/To Rachel* (2003)

commitment to articulating works of art beyond the logic of representation where that entails art's operation as a mute mirroring, a mere reflection of the conditions of the world, rather than as an active constituent element within them. I would argue that art is a vital form of articulation, that visualisation and materialisation are active and forceful modes in the production of the real, and that they can transcend the limits of current understanding by pushing the boundaries of imagination, in the most rigorous sense. My explorations of art throughout this volume thus resist bland representational forms of interpretation and are, instead, linked to concepts of affect and figuration that posit art's agency. This is a critical shift from asking what artworks show us about the world to asking how they can enable us to participate in, and potentially change, the parameters through which we negotiate that world.

Second, what kinds of subject are produced through the present conditions of transnational, transcultural and transmedial exchange, or, more simply, who inhabits a global home? This question takes as read that spaces and subjects are mutually constituted in a dynamic exchange, and that subjects are intercorporeal, transindividual and generous – open to encounters with very different others. Reconceiving subjectivity beyond the isolating fortress of monolithic individualism has important ramifications for thinking differently about the subjects interpellated through the impact of globalisation.

Simply, contemporary art circulates along the same pathways as global capital and its makers traverse the routes charted by both empowered, metropolitan elites and the economic migrants left in their wake. Given this fact, it is hardly surprising that the processes of habitation and dwelling that engender subjects through these economies should be articulated so often in the work. Articulating these processes, however, does not suggest merely 'representing' a global subject, nor does it presume that artists need be engaged in an autobiographical translation of their own, now commonplace, experiences of transnational movement. Rather, my argument here is that aesthetic interventions into the imbrication of place and subject provide a unique and powerful means by which to reconfigure, and thus reconceive, questions of knowledge, agency and political commitment in a globalised world. The works discussed in the chapters that follow participate in a critical exploration of subjectivity as an inter-subjective, intercorporeal practice, embedded within multilayered networks of exchange. I am arguing that they do not so much illustrate the subject (as a 'thing'), as materialise subjects-in-process.

These insights preface the third question posed by this volume: what are the ethical and political implications of be(long)ing at home everywhere, of a 'cosmopolitan imagination' that is premised upon an embodied, embedded, generous and affective form of subjectivity in conversation with others in and through difference? Cosmopolitanism, as it is deployed within this volume, is grounded, materially specific and relational; it is a committed address to cultural diversity and movement beyond fixed geo-political borders. It is linked to the concept of home through processes of belonging (making yourself

at home) and to ethics, through both the ideas of dwelling and hospitality.[3] I would argue further, that it is *aesthetic* in the strongest possible sense; as a politics that operates at the interface of materiality and imagination, the individual and the social, the local and the global, cosmopolitanism asks how we might connect, through dialogue rather than monologue, our response-ability to our responsibilities within a world community.[4]

Conceived as an embodied and situated dialogue with difference, cosmopolitanism is indebted to the insights of feminism, especially transnational feminist theory, which so effectively links the project to rethink cosmopolitanism with notions of ethics in an era of globalisation.[5] The impact of feminist praxis on the concept of cosmopolitanism is especially strong where connections are made between the macro-level of a politics of world citizenship and micro-level explorations of making ourselves at home in the world, of creating opportunities for hospitality and belonging that cut across difference and are engendered through conversations with embodied others. My use of 'conversation' here is specific and strategic. Following the logic of Kwame Anthony Appiah, I would locate conversations that cut across difference at the centre of hospitality, of opening ourselves to others through imaginative engagement rather than assimilation. In the wake of identity politics premised upon brutal exclusions, conversation and dialogue offer themselves generously, including others. As Appiah wrote:

> Conversations across boundaries of identity – whether national, religious or something else – begin with the sort of imaginative engagement you get when you read a novel or watch a movie or attend to a work of art that speaks from some place other than your own.[6]

Appiah's thinking on cosmopolitanism suggests intrinsic interconnections between conversation, imagination and art at the level of ethics. Similarly, Rob Wilson extended the political ramifications of aesthetics in his work on the 'new cosmopolitanism', arguing that:

> … at best, globalization is generating new forms of reflexivity, altered terms of citizenship, amplified melanges and ties to transnational culture, and thus provoking *an aesthetic of openness* toward otherness that is not just the chance for commodification, spectatorship, and colonization.[7]

In the present volume, I am less concerned with engaging wholesale in a revisionist critique (or salvage[8]) of the concept of cosmopolitanism, than I am with interrogating the specific potential of contemporary art to engender a critical, yet effective, cosmopolitan imagination, an aesthetic of openness that acknowledges its place within the world and is responsible for it.

It is my contention that cosmopolitan imagination is key to engendering a global sense of ethical and political responsibility at the level of the subject.

Cosmopolitan imagination is an emergent concept, it does not describe law or public policy and it cannot assure compliance in that sense. However, it is also a future-oriented and generative concept, able to locate and affect us profoundly by transforming our relationship with/in the world. Cosmopolitan imagination generates conversations in a field of flesh, fully sensory, embodied processes of interrogation, critique and dialogue that can enable us to think of our homes and ourselves as open to change and alterity. Understanding ourselves as wholly embedded within the world, we can imagine people and things beyond our immediate experience and develop our ability to respond to very different spaces, meanings and others.

Potentially, art is one of the most significant modes through which the cosmopolitan imagination emerges and is articulated. By materialising concepts and meanings beyond the limits of a narrow individualism, art enables us to encounter difference, imagine change that has yet to come, and make possible the new. Like the concept of cosmopolitan imagination, art is not synonymous with legislative force, it cannot oblige us to act, its register is affective not prescriptive. But I would argue that this in no way reduces its power to effect change at the level of the subject, and that such change is at the core of ethical and political agency in the most profound sense.

Imagining ourselves at home in the world, where our homes are not fixed objects but processes of material and conceptual engagement with other people and different places, is the first step toward becoming cosmopolitan. Art is especially able to convey the intimate relation between the material and the conceptual that this requires, invoking the contingency of home by positioning us at the nexus of the 'real' and the 'imaginary', while using the sensory force of objects, images and spaces to engage memory, desire and cognition. In short, art threatens to bring us to our senses in the midst of anaesthetising histories designed to facilitate the instrumental logic of global capitalism. In its affectivity, it runs counter to those forces that would isolate us in our singularity and foreclose generosity, intimacy and care – the very source of ethical agency.

This volume might be characterised as part of the 'affective turn' in the humanities, given its emphasis upon aesthetics combined with an intersubjective and intercorporeal understanding of agency and sociality. But I would add that my evocation of affectivity is precise, not overarching, and does not negate criticality, rigour and debate. I am not concerned with affect as 'feeling', where that presumes highly individualistic, pre-Oedipal, ineducable responses to stimuli in the environment. Rather, following scholars such as Rosalyn Diprose, I understand the significance of affect as social, open to critical development and change. Affectivity, as Diprose argued, enables ' … the production and transformation of the corporeal self through others'.[9] Further, affectivity is the foundation of intellectual rigour and exigent thought – Diprose again, rhetorically: 'What makes me think? In particular, what makes me think in a way that would be critical of existing ideas?'[10]

We are compelled to think, to act upon that which affects us, that which transforms us through our embodied and embedded relationship with/in others in the world.

As I argued earlier, this volume is concerned with art's agency, its potential to make the world, not merely represent it. Exploring affectivity is part of engaging with the agency of art, but it does not provide anything like an exhaustive or full account; indeed, I would suggest there are no full accounts, and that seeking to find one is counterproductive. A more productive strategy acknowledges that art signifies endlessly, is inexhaustible in its range of meanings and potential for conceptual reconfiguration. Saying this, however, is not saying that art means *anything* or *everything* and that there are no parameters through which to engage meaningfully with its range of potential signification. Rather, I would argue that those of us who wish to open a dialogue with art need to become self-critical and responsible for our methods of engagement. We are neither invisible hands, drawing from nowhere with nothing, nor are we omnipotent interpreters, giving true form to mute matter. The nature of our dialogue is itself part of the meaning we constitute with and through art.

These insights have had radical repercussions within my own research and writing, and I cannot separate my mode of making text from the questions I am seeking to address. In the present volume an exciting challenge is offered by the enquiry – namely, how to articulate the works' critical affectivity and dialogic potential in processes of thinking, rather than as objects of knowledge. My answer has been to think carefully about both the structure and the textual modes through which the volume has been produced.

This book, born of my fascination with a paradox, is not a survey text, does not seek to categorise all contemporary practices using domestic materials and motifs, and is not interested in providing reductive statements about the representation of home in contemporary art. Rather, the structure of the volume is materially related to its theme. *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination* is written through four 'architectonic figurations': foundation, threshold, passage and landing. These are architectonic in that they simultaneously reference the built environment and the transformative structure of knowledge-systems. They are figurations in that they are provisional, yet powerful, connective tropes, deployed to enable us to think through the mutually constitutive interactions between places and subjects in material and conceptual formations of 'home'. Indeed, the figures of foundation, threshold, passage and landing are exceptionally apt in their conceptual modulation between the physical locus of house/home and the agency of 'homing' in the wake of global communication, travel, migration and exile. That is, each term suggests both a familiar, domestic site and a complex engagement with the structures of identity, location and difference in the movement across psycho-social and geo-political borders.

In adopting the logic of the figuration, I do not mean to suggest that I am speaking of 'figurative art' or even asserting the tautology that all art is figurative. Rather, in thinking through figuration, I am indebted again to feminist philosophy, specifically to the work of Rosi Braidotti on materialist concepts of becoming and nomadic subjectivity. As she wrote:

> Figurations are not figurative ways of thinking, but rather more materialistic mappings of situated or embedded and embodied positions. … By figuration, I mean a politically informed map that outlines our own situated perspective. A figuration renders our image in terms of a decentred and multi-layered vision of the subject as a dynamic and changing entity.[11]

In outlining the concept of the figuration, Braidotti links the productive engagement of the embodied and situated subject with the meanings being made. Meaning emerges in encounters, through figurations. In the present context, such insights explain precisely why the nature of the writing and structure of this volume are important, and how they might be understood to play a critical role in the making of the concepts they articulate. In a more concrete sense, the figurations through which this book has been written have enabled me to link two important elements of my own textual method – close reading and writing *with*. Close reading is crucial to my practice since my work entails a drawing forth from the specific materials and modes of particular practices toward a form of writing with works such that multivalent connections across disciplinary and medial boundaries are able to emerge. I do not write about art, but create concepts, ideas and meanings with and through it in combination with other modes of thought.

But how do we move from close reads to writings with? I would argue through conversation, through generative dialogues that enable crossings to take place between speaking, writing, reading and making. The drawing forth of close reading and writing with are acts of intimacy, of touching thought, affective agency. And for me, the intimacy of writing/drawing is ever more significant. A drawing, taken in the most open-ended sense, not as a study for something else, for a finished work, but as a process of thinking, of elaborating concepts in time, toward new and emergent ideas, lends itself to the active conversational movement from close reading to writing with. Increasingly, I am convinced that a book is a series of marks on a support. I offer, in the pages that follow, thoughts on contemporary art and the possibility of a cosmopolitan imagination, that are themselves a writing with, a drawing forth, through figurations, of my own understandings and hopes for the (be)coming future.

Chapter 1

Foundation – dynamic ground

Foundation – the lowest and supporting part of a building; the natural or prepared ground on which some structure rests

Foundation – the basis on which anything stands, and by which it is supported; the fundamental assumptions from which something is begun or developed or calculated or explained

Foundation – the act of founding, establishing, settling; the act of starting something for the first time, of introducing something new

Beijing *via* Wellington (*via* Shanghai, Berlin, Vancouver …)

In 2004, Yin Xiuzhen showed her *Portable Cities* project in the exhibition *Concrete Horizons: Contemporary Art from China*, held at the Adam Art Gallery in Wellington, New Zealand. *Portable Cities* is a mutable artwork consisting of variable numbers of 'suitcase cityscapes', each fabricated from used clothing, found objects and maps taken from a particular urban centre. Between 2000 and 2004, these cityscapes were installed in differing configurations, usually in combination with local sound recordings, in galleries and exhibition spaces throughout the world. The suitcase cityscapes installed in each show varied, but the roll call of cities mapped by the project as a whole reads like a list of the metropolitan centres that rose to international artworld prominence during the 1990s – Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Hong Kong, Lhasa, Singapore, Lisbon, Berlin, Sydney, Vancouver, San Francisco, Minneapolis – and to these were added, in Yin's work, well-established centres such as New York and Paris.

This obvious 'name check' demonstrates more than Yin's extraordinary success as an individual artist,[1] it signals the accelerated international profile of contemporary art from China in the years following the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square and the country's subsequent 'open' cultural policy and engagement with global trade networks. Chinese art is, arguably, the art market success story of the past 15 years – indeed, Charles Saatchi's recent

Figure 1.1 Yin Xiuzhen, *Portable Cities* (2004)

decision to focus his new gallery around a collection of contemporary art from China is clear confirmation of the market dominance of the work.[2] Similarly, China itself, in terms of the global marketplace, is a tiger rising from its rest; the massive infrastructural work being undertaken in Beijing, Shanghai and other metropolitan centres is but a small measure of the changes being wrought to the country as a whole as it becomes a truly global economic force.

Portable Cities can lend itself almost too readily to these dual frameworks, attesting to the art market's ability to make international superstars of young artists from China, who spend their time travelling from one biennale to another, their works and lives packed into suitcases and carried on long-haul flights. The world-traveller contemporary Chinese artist tirelessly reproduces the cities she sees, each becoming more like the other, more an interchangeable image packed in a case than a lived space, as the pace of globalisation irons out the last individual wrinkles left to suggest that cultural difference might be anything more than the consumable pleasure of the exotic.

I would contest this rather obvious, clichéd reading of *Portable Cities*, however, and, indeed, criticism of Yin's work that simply locates her as an 'authentic' Chinese woman artist longing for the return of her home, Beijing, to an imaginary past beyond the reach of change or the introduction of 'foreign'

influences. By contrast, I would argue that *Portable Cities* demonstrates, materially, how a contemporary woman artist from Beijing makes herself 'at home everywhere'.

The urban skylines of *Portable Cities* are, literally, supported by suitcases [colour plate 4]. In this sense, the works convey immediately an important paradox: the cities' iconic profiles can be identified by seemingly fixed symbols (the Golden Gate Bridge, the Eiffel Tower, etc.), yet their foundation, the ground on which they rest, is quintessentially mobile and dynamic, produced as it is from well-travelled luggage. There is a fascinating parallel between this paradox, one that I would argue is central to *Portable Cities*, and the insights of geographers such as Saskia Sassen, who have sought to understand the significance of metropolitan centres to the phenomenon of globalisation. As Sassen has argued, the inter-state system that dominated world-wide exchange over the past three centuries has now given way to a transnational economy that operates through key metropolitan sites. These metropoles simultaneously centralise resources (producing ostensibly stable urban points) and increase dispersal, fluidity and movement by facilitating and extending transnational interchange.[3]

Yin's cities operate likewise, allowing us to capture the 'essence' of these urban sites, fix them in our imaginations, yet be aware of their movement, their likelihood to be folded away at any minute and transported to the next space. There is a tension produced in every installation of *Portable Cities* between the specific materiality of the places enfolded in the suitcases, their skylines fashioned from the used clothes of their inhabitants, and their inter-action in the space of the gallery as nodal points, linked by a creative cart-ography drawn differently in each show. The cities in which viewers stand participate in an aesthetic map, making connections between and across art, culture, economic exchange and the contemporary geo-political terrain of globalisation. 'Beijing' is understood simultaneously as an entity in itself *and* within a fluid pattern of movement and exchange: *via* Vancouver, New York, and so on.

In this sense, Yin's project again parallels Sassen's insights and extends the implications suggested by other geographers who have focused on global cities networks. For instance, understanding contemporary metropolitan centres as 'portable cities' has profound implications for unpicking what Peter Taylor, David Walker and John Beaverstock called 'embedded statism', the epistemo-logical legacy of the primacy that European nation-states have enjoyed from the middle of the 18th century until quite recently. Through a detailed materialist analysis of the emergence and development of world cities in globalisation, they have provided compelling evidence for their claim that it is not only possible, but necessary, to 'juxtapose [an] alternative metageo-graphy of a network of world cities – a space of flows – against the dominant, conventional metageography of nation-states – a space of territories'.[4] Like Sassen, Taylor *et al*. have argued for a change in the foundation of our

geographical imagination. Rather than understand the world as a set of bounded nation-states, we need to engage productively with the geographies of transnational exchange, located in very material ways, through multiply inter-connected urban centres, or, as I am suggesting in keeping with this reconfi-gured founding frame, through a creative map of portable cities.[5]

The ramifications of re-orienting our geographical imagination are exten-sive, and this chapter will certainly not exhaust them. Crucial to the present argument are two main points: first, that the 'alternative metageography' that is being developed here does not simply reverse the existing binary logic that pits territory/stability against flows/rootlessness; and second, that the founding relationship between home and identity can be rethought through concepts of movement to productive ends. The first point has an impact upon the development of a cosmopolitan imaginary that is relevant to the present geo-political climate as well as materially connected to contemporary art practices, while the latter enables an argument to be made that connects the agency of art-making with the articulation of identities-in-process. I see the two as intrinsically linked.

Critically analysing the concept of home is imperative to making this connection, and my argument is indebted to the numerous scholars from widely differing disciplines whose work has sought to rethink 'home' as both a conceptual and material formation. Crucial to this is the question of move-ment or, as the editors of *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration* put it: '(b)eing grounded is not necessarily about being fixed; being mobile is not necessarily about being detached'.[6] The necessity for stating this remains with us, despite decades of post-colonial research on exile, migrancy, and transnational and global exchange. The necessity is predicated upon the strength of the hold exercised by a geographical imaginary that equates home with stasis, stability and security (in terms of both safety and secured identities) and exile/migrancy with detachment and rootlessness – the loss of an authentic and sustained origin point. It will suffice to remind ourselves that this logic underpinned some of the most brutal activities in living memory, from the attempted genocide of the 'rootless cosmopolitan' Jews in Europe at the mid-point of the 20th century, to the present refusal of sanctuary to tens of thousands of refugees throughout the world.

There have been many astute analyses of the reactionary tendency to equate domesticity, as both home and nation ('domestic' as opposed to 'foreign'), with security, and to guard its boundaries jealously against vilified others, not least among feminist scholars aware that the domestic sphere is not always the safe haven for women that such myths maintain. Indeed, feminists have long critiqued the simplistic equation of home with identity and community as too fixed, too brutally defended and too undifferentiated.[7] As a foundational myth, however, it is not easy to supplant.

Portable Cities provides a space in which we might begin to unravel the potent oppositions between home and away, stability and exile, authenticity

and rootlessness, that make it so difficult to develop new ways of thinking through the mobility of subjects, identities and community as they are now experienced so commonly throughout the world. Crucially, *Portable Cities* suggests a modulation between objects and processes – between the metropolitan centres it materialises and the flows and networks they engender. Using this modulation, the installation of the suitcase cityscapes maintains a productive tension between the local and the global, the concrete and the conceptual. In engaging with the work, we are able to see that the soft urban silhouettes are fashioned from clothes – clothes taken from the cities' own residents. As we remember or imagine these iconic skylines, we are invited to step back, to read the suitcase cities installed here as a map, and to make connections between the intimate, portable places at a macropolitical level. The work never collapses one into the other, but rather, like stars in a constellation, the cityscapes retain their particularity while at the same time becoming more than themselves through their vital, global, interconnection.

As a way of imagining urban domesticity both as a local, materially specific phenomenon, and as one that is wholly embedded within dynamic world networks, the work counters a significant and fundamental assumption – that the strength of our homes, our nations and our identities rests on our ability to provide unyielding foundations. But the development of a contemporary cosmopolitan imaginary, of truly connected world citizenship in a era marked by global cities networks, suggests the establishment of a new founding logic, one capable of acknowledging the intimate interaction between the local and the global, the domestic and its 'others'. In *Portable Cities*, Yin's home is still Beijing, but this is Beijing *via* Shanghai, Singapore, Berlin – a truly global home.[8]

In configuring a multi-centred, global home, Yin is in good company. For example, arguing against the anthropological conventions that take home to be the fixed locus of identity and community, social theorists Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson wrote: 'a far more mobile conception of home should come to the fore, as something "plurilocal", something to be taken along whenever one decamps'.[9] The resonance of their argument with *Portable Cities* is as striking as it is intriguing. If, as I would argue, *Portable Cities* enables Yin to make herself at home everywhere, or at least in every metropolitan centre she negotiates as a successful contemporary artist, then the work can indeed be seen as a 'plurilocal' home taken along whenever she decamps. I am not suggesting, however, that *Portable Cities* is merely an illustration of social theory, the depiction of a more mobile conception of home. Rather, I am arguing that contemporary art can provide a distinctive perspective on the core cultural, intellectual and political debates of our time, in this instance offering a means by which we might participate in the imaginative spaces that emerge as movement and process become fundamental to notions of home, identity and community. The paradigm shift Rapport and Dawson called for

as a matter of priority within the social sciences is materialised here in art; each tells us something about the need, and the potential, to create new 'founding' figures appropriate to the dynamic geo-political circumstances of globalisation.

Returning to the material qualities of *Portable Cities* is useful here. The cityscapes might be described as works of reclamation, in which discarded domestic materials are transformed into iconic urban images for a global art audience. These works of art reclaim the quotidian as a powerful signifier within the processes of globalisation, processes commonly assumed to destroy local, everyday differences in their quest to produce a uniform world market. Commenting on the qualities of the everyday in *Portable Cities*, the critic Melanie Swalwell argued convincingly that the project does not so much represent *displacement*, all too commonly cited as the principal experience of globalisation, but registers the activity of *emplacement*, of making place within a rapidly moving and fluid network of exchange.[10] This thinking parallels my own, and demonstrates a powerful riposte to many of the most intransigent assumptions concerning the impact of globalisation on the concept of home, not least the assumption that the local and the global, the domestic and the foreign, are antagonistic opponents rather than, as I would argue, intimate interlocutors.

Critical to my argument here is the link between the fabric of the works and their fabrication; it is my contention that the materiality of the suitcase cityscapes, the processes of their production and the locus of their consumption (as art works specifically designed to be seen in multiple, metropolitan sites), are integrally connected. This integral link establishes them firmly within the dynamics of globalised world cities networks, yet at the same time capable of effecting a critical dialogue with and through the local. Yin's material focus on the fragile remnants of everyday lives, *lived*, makes *Portable Cities* more than a monument to the memories of the cities' inhabitants. The clothes and cases provide the ground from which Yin makes herself at home everywhere; through manifold acts of domestic reclamation, we are invited to imagine and make our homes in the world anew.

Understanding Yin's *Portable Cities* as a multiple act of making – making art, making home, making subjects – reiterates the figure of foundation as a practice, an act of establishing, settling or introducing something new. As an act of foundation, *Portable Cities* connects the affective qualities of home with the material qualities of contemporary art; this in turn enables individual subjects to connect with collective forms of cultural signification. The quotidian elements of Yin's work are profound precisely because they link the most ordinary individual activities of living in a city – wearing, tearing, mending, walking, carrying – with the collective bodily engagement that produces the image of the global city itself, its 'visage' or skyline. The everyday movement of people within these localised, particular spaces becomes the global

movement of images, ideas, languages, cultures and capital. The suitcase cityscapes bear witness to how 'home-making' connects banal acts of domestic labour with the collective endeavour of founding and maintaining a transnational, urban economy.

The reference to home-making above is intentional and carries with it a number of important implications, not least Yin's own history as a central practitioner within what has come to be called 'Apartment Art'. Apartment Art is the collective term for a range of critical art practices that flourished in opposition to state-sponsored art in metropolitan centres in China from the 1970s to the 1990s. Using their own homes as alternative art spaces, artists associated with Apartment Art made work that was embedded within an intimate, private sphere yet was also, as Gao Minglu has argued, a pivotal response to contemporary cultural politics.[11]

Yin's association with the phenomenon of Apartment Art came in the early 1990s, when the Chinese government's draconian attempts to contain the unrest that had led to the incidents in Tiananmen Square made it extremely difficult for artists to place critical work in public spaces. Yin's work in this period was typified by acts of domestic reclamation similar to those of *Portable Cities*; making work with discarded clothing, furniture and other common household objects, Yin explored the impact of globalisation on her 'home' (China, and more specifically, Beijing). In *Cemented Shoes* (1995), for example, Yin filled pairs of used shoes with cement, hanging the solidified objects from the ceiling of her apartment. The work thus brought the most common building material of the globalising city into direct contact with the bodily trace of its population – the concrete, poured into the shoes, laid a foundation, but a foundation that was mutable (each pair bore the specific trace of its owner) and that spoke of embodiment, difference and change rather than uniformity and fixity. The soft and hard, the animate and inanimate, the human and the built environment, were in intimate dialogue, each impacting upon and forming the other.

While the work produced by the many artists associated with Apartment Art was varied, there were some shared, central concerns that are pertinent here, not least the process-oriented encounter with domestic labour and materials and the prominence of women artists amongst its key proponents.[12] These facts lend themselves to a critical reconsideration of yet another element of 'home-making', namely the question of the gendered division of domestic space and labour. Exploring the concept of home in relation to feminist politics, Iris Marion Young suggested that home- and nation-building have been valued as masculine, transcendent, 'history-making' activities, whilst the immanent work of home-making has more commonly been reviled as feminised drudgery. In a counter to this thinking, Young argued for the critical significance of home-making to the construction of history, identity and, importantly, a fluid subject-in-process. In this sense, her concept of home can be an enabling figure in the contemporary global arena,

one that moves beyond binary thinking and engenders politics through the everyday:

> … home carries a core positive meaning as the material anchor for a sense of agency and a shifting, fluid identity. This concept of home does not oppose the personal and the political, but instead describes conditions that make the political possible.[13]

Portable Cities is an apt heir to the domestic legacy of Apartment Art, where the intimate confines of the artist's home became the site of an engagement with a rapidly changing city, nation-state and global world, and to feminist reconceptions of home-making. In *Portable Cities* we see these concerns folded back upon themselves, such that the suitcase cities become the founding figure of a plurilocal, global home. This home, as we have seen earlier, participates in the 'paradox' of cities within global circuits, being at once a consolidated nodal point and a site of fluid exchange – an iconic image built on a travelling case. Moreover, by making herself 'at home everywhere', Yin articulated global citizenship – *cosmopolitanism* – as a form of plurilocal subjectivity, one that intertwines the local and the global in and through the everyday. In this, the work suggests a renegotiated figure of the foundation, one that links spaces with subjects materially, yet dynamically. Yin's suitcase-foundations are not demonstrations of the loss of an authentic home or identity, but of an understanding that homes, and the subjects who inhabit them, are made in the movement between objects and processes, materials and making. As Yin put it:

> People in our contemporary setting have moved from residing in a static environment to becoming souls in a constantly shifting transcience … (the) suitcase becomes the life support container of modern living … *(t)he holder of the continuous construction of a human entity*.[14]

That a mobile foundation can preserve and maintain the 'continuous construction' of the subject suggests a paradigm shift; in a world where foundations move, we can make ourselves at home everywhere, imagine identity, subjectivity and, indeed, community to be mutable, in process, but also material, able to be shaped otherwise. It is here that we encounter responsibility for our position in the world and for those positions that we take up.

   It is useful at this point to turn to Rosalind Diprose's work on embodiment and feminist ethics, specifically in light of her thought-provoking exploration of the modulation between object and process. This work is critical to my own development of the figure of foundation as a 'dynamic ground', not only because of the object/process link, but because Diprose argued that ethics is,

at core, concerned with subjects and spaces interconnected through dwelling, as both place and practice:

> [Ethics] is about being positioned by, and taking a position in relation to, others. It should not be surprising then that 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning character and dwelling, or habitat. Dwelling is both a noun (the place to which one returns) and a verb (the practice of dwelling); my dwelling is both my habitat and my habitual way of life. My habitual way of life, ethos or set of habits determines my character (my specificity or what is properly my own). These habits are not given: they are constituted through the repetition of bodily acts the character of which are governed by the habitat I occupy. From this understanding of ethos, *ethics can be defined as the study and practice of that which constitutes one's habitat*, or as the problematic of the constitution of one's embodied place in the world.[15]

Diprose, in this passage, forges a critical link between home (dwelling, *n*., habitat) and home-making (dwelling, *v*., habitual way of life), or between the material constraints of our position in the world and our agency in making, maintaining and changing them. The subject formed at the interstices of this critical modulation is an embodied, embedded and responsible subject – the subject who can inhabit a plurilocal, cosmopolitan home.

If *Portable Cities* found a means by which to participate in a transformed geographical imaginary, Yin's self-portrait installation of 1998, *Yin Xiuzhen*, looks more closely at the plurilocal subject whose home is built on dynamic ground [colour plate 5]. In this work, ten pairs of canvas shoes contain photographic images of Yin's face taken at various points in her life – as a child, a schoolgirl, an adolescent, an adult woman; each pair is, in turn, placed on a photographic 'ground': a carpet, a wooden floor, cobblestones, a pavement and so on. In one sense, the photographic likenesses ensure that each is recognisable as the 'same' person, yet their imaged repetition calls into question the very notion of the 'same'. We are brought to the realisation that our concept of similitude is premised upon visual protocols, an understanding of the legibility of the face when presented to us in particular formats. Just as the concrete Yin had poured into shoes three years before revealed itself to be a shifting, rather than fixed, ground, the photographs of Yin's face demonstrate that likeness is the product of an economy of the same, of the foundational logic that constructs the subject as continuous and transcendent, a subject whose 'interior' self unfolds sequentially through their legible 'exterior' over time.

The framing devices of Yin's self-portrait provide a space for a more productive and nuanced reading to emerge, because the photographs are doubly mediated – as images made through the conventions of formal photographic portraiture during Yin's life growing up in Communist China, and again, here, as she reconfigured them, changing their scale, halving the prints and then

placing the sections within pairs of shoes. These shoes are the dynamic ground of a plurilocal subject, a foundation that is materially specific and yet mutable – the shoes of a million schoolgirls raised in Maoist China, every pair the 'same', but clearly never so. The shoes locate their subject in a definite time and place, but are simultaneously a cipher for movement, both in their reference to walking and their allusion to the unbound feet of Chinese women after the cultural revolution. Each pair in the self-portrait signals a temporal shift, an indication of a stopping point on a longer journey whose endpoint is not pre-determined, but is in process. Unhindered by the teleology that has dominated European models of subjectivity for centuries, the subject envisaged through this work is located, but not fixed; mobile, but not rootless. This is a subject whose identity is not settled through a foundation impervious to change, but one open to transformation.

While I am not arguing that the self portrait, *Yin Xiuzhen*, and the *Portable Cities* project are reducible to one another, I would suggest that they are resonant, that they configure a contemporary foundation, one able to connect subjects and spaces critically through material forms of emergence. The works enable us to think through homes and home-making, local cities and global networks, the personal, the political and the portable as we strive to develop an adequate language for the plurilocal cosmopolitan subjects who inhabit the complex networked geographies of the present day.

New Delhi *via* Shimla (*via* Lahore, Budapest, Paris …)

During 1995–96, Vivan Sundaram created a touring installation entitled *The Sher-Gil Archive*.[16] In the installation were five teak boxes containing photographs, documents, letters and objects from Sundaram's family archive, organised under the following titles: *Box 1: Father*, *Box 2: Mother*, *Box 3: Home*, *Box 4: Sisters* and *Box 5: Family Album*. The lineage Sundaram traced in the boxes is critical to the project; the photographic record left by his maternal grandfather, Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, is the foundation of *The Sher-Gil Archive*, both temporally and materially. Umrao Singh was the eldest son of a Punjab chieftain and a Sanskrit scholar with well-established interests in yoga, astronomy and politics. Significantly, he was also a pioneering photographer, many of whose works were centred on his family – his wife, the Hungarian opera singer Marie Antoinette (née Gottesmann), his elder daughter, the well-known modernist painter Amrita, and his younger daughter Indira, Sundaram's mother. Appropriating Umrao Singh's[17] photographs, Sundaram's installation traces the history of a remarkable family of scholars and artists from the start of the 20th century to its mid-point.

Box Three: Home from *The Sher-Gil Archive* consists of four cubes covered with photographs taken by Umrao Singh of the various homes inhabited by the Sher-Gil family between 1912 and 1941 [colour plate 6]. Married in Lahore in 1912, Umrao Singh and Marie Antoinette moved to Budapest in 1913 for the

birth of their daughters (Amrita in 1913 and Indira in 1914), and were then unable to return to India due to the outbreak of the First World War. Returning in 1920, they lived in Shimla until, in 1929, they moved to Paris to enable Amrita to attend the École des Beaux Arts. In 1934, at Amrita's behest, the family moved back to India and Amrita set up her studio in Shimla.[18] The photographs appropriated by Sundaram in the installation both present the interiors of the houses and apartments in Lahore, Budapest, Shimla and Paris as historical documents, and re-present them as a work of art, as an aesthetic negotiation between cultural traditions and national borders.

Box 3 enacts a form of domestic topography that, taken together with the other four boxes of *The Sher-Gil Archive*, provides an evocative portrait of a family whose intellectual and artistic endeavours crossed continents, languages, philosophies and cultures. In some senses, the Sher-Gil family epitomises the notion of cosmopolitanism as a form of elite cultural movement undertaken in the main by artists, writers and intellectuals with sufficient financial resource and/or social and political connections to move freely across geographical and social boundaries. However, locating the cosmopolitan project described here simply within the privileged realm of the bourgeoisie dismisses too easily the significance of the transnational experience articulated by *The Sher-Gil Archive* and its development of a cross-cultural visual and material language.

Turning again to *Box 3: Home*, it is possible to describe a more complex configuration of the cosmopolitan imagination within the work, one that speaks of the potential of contemporary art to raise important questions of home, identity and community in a global world. The four cities in which the Sher-Gil family lived in the period – Lahore, Budapest, Shimla and Paris – are metropolitan centres with long histories of intercontinental trade and cultural exchange, further marked by European imperialism and decolonisation, and by the legacy of providing sanctuary to numerous exiles and migrant communities over many years. They are complex and, arguably, cosmopolitan sites, where cultural difference has been a cause of conflict as well as a source of remarkable innovation for generations. However, these cities, as entities in themselves, are not the subject of either the photographs taken by Umrao Singh or the installation produced by Sundaram. Rather, as the title of the work reminds us, *Box 3* explores the Sher-Gil family home, a plurilocal home the foundations of which were mobile and multiple.

In a fascinating parallel to Yin's *Portable Cities*, Sundaram's archival interrogation of the domestic demonstrates the intimate connection between the personal realm of the family home and the geo-political networks through which it is inscribed. The Sher-Gil family moved between urban centres in Europe and the Indian sub-continent, making themselves at home in both. The cities in which they settled fostered their multi-faceted intellectual and artistic pursuits, such that Indian philosophy, literature and nationalist politics could be brought into connection with European modernism and the burgeoning

photographic technologies of the period. The interiors imaged by Umrao Singh clearly combined materials and motifs from India and Europe, from furnishings and decorations to instruments, objects and images; Amrita's studio in Shimla, for example, was decorated in the 'international style', while the family's Paris apartment was the backdrop for numerous images of Umrao Singh practising yoga.

But *The Sher-Gil Archive* does not simply collate and present family photographs, as if the past is, or could be, available to us through unmediated 'evidence'. In Sundaram's installation, the photographs are subject to a radical reconfiguration. Sundaram engaged actively with the images as objects themselves, with what might be called their consequential materiality; these photographs are not just transparent windows through which we see the past, they are its physical residue, its trace in the present, with which we construct an emergent future. In *Box 3: Home*, for example, the photographs of interiors by Umrao Singh are mounted on small cubes to become three-dimensional forms, portable homes, able to be packed away in their teak case and relocated at will. And they were; like Yin's *Portable Cities* project, *The Sher-Gil Archive* was a travelling work, a touring installation produced for multiple locations (Budapest, Mumbai and New Delhi) and eventually shown in even more (including Havana and Tokyo).

The fact that the works in the show were packed up, transported and reinvented in these different venues is significant to their articulation of home as a key cosmopolitan site. The venues themselves demonstrate the interconnections between the international modernism of the Sher-Gil family's history and Sundaram's contemporary situation as an established artist, based in India, whose work also travels widely, making him well-known to an international art audience. And if Paris, Budapest, Lahore and Shimla can be called cosmopolitan in their histories of cultural exchange, then Mumbai, New Delhi, Havana and Tokyo should not be underestimated in this regard, with their extensive transnational links. *The Sher-Gil Archive* thus incorporates both a history marked by developed international networks and a contemporary dialogue with and through transnational exchange. The plurilocal home configured by Sundaram's archival installation goes beyond a documentary family history to engage with the contemporary politics of international art practice and the articulation of the artist's own embodied location within this frame. Sundaram lives and works in New Delhi – here understood *via* Shimla, Lahore, Budapest, Paris and Mumbai.

The title of the installation suggests yet another compelling angle on this argument. In an essay accompanying *The Sher-Gil Archive*, Katalin Keserü raised the problematic of classification in regard to the work, stating that '(i)nstead of works of art, the viewer is surrounded in this exhibition by documents whose particular sequence, however, turns the entire "archive" into a work of art'.[19] I would argue that whether the work is 'art' or 'archive' is immaterial; its title is provocative, its content precarious and its

signification performative. It is neither art nor archive and yet it is both, resolutely positioned to destabilise just such simplistic, foundational, binary norms. The work's mode of address requires an engagement with these categories, precisely to undermine their certitude. But this still begs the question – to what end?

It is here that I would argue that the real power of Sundaram's reconfiguration of his maternal grandfather's photographic archive resides; *The Sher-Gil Archive* is positioned at the nexus between archive and installation, juxtaposing the indexical trace of the historical past with the aesthetic agency of the present. The work materialises the dynamic ground of presentation and 're-presentation', reminding us that the archive can never be the foundation of a definitive history. That is, as many have argued before me, there can be no 'pure' or 'originary' representation of the past guaranteed by the archive, no documents that can ever do justice to the events that produced them, and no complete reconstruction of the past from the residual fragments left in its wake. Critics of the archive's ostensible status as the foundation of historical truth are numerous, and most point both to the iniquitous power politics of the formation of archives (the documents recorded and kept are usually those that support dominant regimes) and to the question of its fragmentary physical nature.[20]

Significantly, in his writing on archives, Paul Ricoeur argued that the indexical residue, or trace, that is the hallmark of the archive's contents is fragmentary, but is also capable of surpassing the event that it in part recalls.[21] Ricoeur's argument is particularly suggestive in the case of *The Sher-Gil Archive*, since Sundaram's family record is available to us only in and through its reconfiguration as art; it is given to the viewer as always already within the processes of mediation and representation. Ricoeur's suggestion that the sheer presence of the archival record, its material evidence in and as an indexical trace, exceeds the 'originary' event, enables us to encounter Sundaram's archive as both less and more than the presentation of his family history, of the ostensibly fixed foundation of home, identity and community. Indeed, it posits a new sense of foundation on the dynamic ground opened by questioning 're-presentation'.

For example, the photographed interiors of *Box 3* become the exteriors of small objects in the installation. Some of the 'home-boxes' reveal empty interior spaces, absences within the seeming wholeness of their geometry and referred geography. The past is not complete, not unified, but literally open to revision, interrogation and alternative formation. Moreover, it is multiple and decentred; 'home' is constructed through the accumulation of evidence of a range of places and activities that constitute the domestic sphere. In this sense, the installation materialises the paradoxical implications of the archive as conceived by Ricoeur in that it is both fragmentary and excessive in its force. It will not resolve either through holistic presentation or through subdued representation – the generation of a singular locus or origin point. In its

refusal to resolve simply, the work maintains a compelling tension between history and the present, and between modernism and its legacy in contemporary global art practices and circuits.

Exploding the conventional, founding logic of representation by demonstrating that every act of 're-presentation' is already an act of material mediation, *The Sher-Gil Archive* bridges art and archive, acknowledging the constraints of the past (the inescapable presence of residual objects) but also affirming the possibility of their imaginative recombination in the present. Significantly, the interconnection between art and the archive demonstrated here also has important ramifications for a critical exploration of the relationship between cosmopolitanism and national identity in a globalised era. While these positions are frequently polarised, they need not be if we take seriously the modulation between object and process – material history and aesthetic agency – mobilised by *The Sher-Gil Archive*. Cosmopolitanism colludes with the most destructive features of globalisation if it occludes the specificity of nation, history and location in an attempt to transcend difference. *The Sher-Gil Archive* may articulate a plurilocal, transnational home, but it does not ignore the significance of where and how its articulation is performed – and the locus of *The Sher-Gil Archive* is in India and Europe.

While India and Europe have a long history of productive interaction, it is not without tension, dispute and violence. A cross-cultural artwork premised upon an archival exploration encounters these complex interactions at every turn. Without developing this in great detail, it is significant to the present argument to note that both archives and installation practices have their own, specific histories of contestation linked to these particular geographical parameters. For example, Gayatri Spivak argued compellingly that the very concept of the archive is problematic in India, where the question of the construction of a national identity is intimately intertwined with the legacy of colonial rule; even the impulse to archive was subject to the vicissitudes of British imperialism.[22] Installation has a similarly ambivalent history in India as an art form derived from the dominance of European practice, yet of significance to many politicised artists throughout South Asia. Writing about Sundaram in 1994, for example, John Roberts noted his role as a key proponent of Indian installation and its radical encounters with post-colonialism, identity, politicised intertextuality and the refusal of a simplistic, essential 'Indian-ness'.[23] Geeta Kapur, in a substantial text on modern and contemporary art in Asia, located in installation another paradox that had emerged in its transplantation to India, namely a revised understanding of the power of the fragment. Rather than lamenting a loss of wholeness, Kapur argued that Indian cultural traditions accepted the fragment (and what she called the 'displacement' of objects) within installation practices as a positive form of signification, thus reminding us again that meanings shift as practices move.[24]

Clearly, it is not my intention to bring these scholars together here to argue that *The Sher-Gil Archive* demonstrates an 'Indian identity' or 'essence', but rather to think critically about the formal processes of mediation that were deployed in this work and the impact they have upon the specific contexts they engage. That is, the work took as its subject a family of mixed cultural descent and affinity, was produced for both Indian and European audiences, and drew together the legacies of archives and installation, forms of culturally-specific collection and aesthetic practice. In each of these ways, *The Sher-Gil Archive* performed cultural hybridity beyond the hackneyed conventions that describe it so awkwardly as falling 'between' cultures, toward a model that moves 'across' or 'with/in', so to hold difference and diversity together in productive tension. Spivak, Roberts and Kapur serve to remind us that the archive and the installation are not transcendent modes of practice, but are located activities with histories and meanings that are as mutable as they are mobile. *The Sher-Gil Archive* therefore is more than the representation of a plurilocal home; it is the performance of plurilocality, a means by which home can be articulated in and through multiple locations without reducing them to sameness. The archive/artwork speaks as well of the mobile ground of a cosmopolitan subject in India as it does in Europe, but it does not say quite the same thing.

Significantly, *The Sher-Gil Archive* was not the only work that Sundaram produced with appropriated photographic material from his family's holdings. In 2001, the artist published *Re-Take of Amrita*, a volume of 38 digital photomontages based mainly on Umrao Singh's photographs with additional images from the family collection.[25] The book is but one selection of a wider body of digital montages that comprise the *Re-Take* project; the volume refers to over 70 photomontages from which its 38 were chosen, and this larger collection of images has also provided material for a number of international exhibitions in places ranging from Paris, London, Amsterdam, New Delhi and Mumbai to Vancouver, Toronto and New York.

The works themselves are black-and-white composite images in which the Sher-Gil family (Umrao Singh, Marie Antoinette, Amrita and Indira) play starring roles within their own domestic drama. In most of the images, the parents and daughters sit, stand, read, paint, play and pose for the camera, occasionally joined by a few others, such as Jacques Despierre or Denise Prouteaux and, significantly in one image, Sundaram himself as a child. Images of Amrita's paintings often feature in the montages, as do mirrors; the family are seen in both European and Indian dress and are nearly always 'at home'.

The photomontages in *Re-Take of Amrita* explore a number of interrelated themes: the domestic archive as a historical record, its appropriation as material for art-making, the digital photograph as a form of remediation and, of course, the significance of home and family as the foundation of identity and community. In addition, I would argue that the *Re-Take* project extends Sundaram's earlier explorations of the Sher-Gils' plurilocal domesticity by

interrogating dwelling in its stronger sense – as both the place and the activity of making oneself at home in the world. In *Re-Take of Amrita*, the interiors are inhabited, the subjects and spaces are mutually constituted, and, as I am arguing here, this takes place in and through the visual, within and over time. That is, the works are premised upon specific structures of vision, modes of proximate, corporeal looking, and these engender an affective visuality that has important consequences for the development of a critical cosmopolitan imaginary. In addition, the works enact particular temporalities, forms of material emergence that have significant ramifications for understanding identity as fundamentally inter-subjective. These two points are intrinsically interlinked and, more critically, are not abstractions, but are grounded within the work itself.

One particular image, *Bourgeois Family: Mirror Frieze*[26] (2001), makes these points well. The digital montage brings together five photographs of the family, grouped around three central mirrors. Sundaram's own description is evocative, calling the work a 'triptych that evolves in the manner of folding screens reveal(ing) the figures from right to left'.[27] The two images of Amrita on the right were taken in Shimla and Budapest, the central image of Marie Antoinette in Lahore, Indira was photographed in Paris, and Umrao Singh, with Sundaram as a small child, was photographed in Shimla. Like *Box 3* from *The Sher-Gil Archive*, we are invited into the home of the Sher-Gil family, a plurilocal home reconceived by Sundaram through a powerful hybrid aesthetic that connects the (western) art historical trope of the triptych with the documentary impulse of the family album and the multiple imaging possibilities afforded by digital media.

Figure 1.2 Vivan Sundaram, *Bourgeois Family: Mirror Frieze* (2001)

The imaged family too, bear this multiple, hybrid signification, their plurilocal identities defined by dress, gesture and activity in the space. Amrita's image is doubled in the mirror at the right, with two 'reflections', one in European dress and one in a sari. Marie Antoinette is likewise doubled, but in this mirror-play, by her own reflection in an 'oriental' robe and by a painting of the back of a woman as she gazes into a mirror. Indira's gaze is returned directly – a young woman looking at herself in the latest fashion from Paris – but her image is joined in the mirror, and thus redoubled, by her father and son, the former demonstrating the use of a camera to the beautiful young child. This is a bourgeois family, as the title of the work indicates, but it is also a culturally-mixed family, demonstrating in this multi-layered image what Mica Nava has elsewhere called a 'visceral cosmopolitanism', an everyday, lived identification with difference.[28] Nava's notion of a visceral cosmopolitanism is extraordinarily resonant with the *Re-Take* project, describing as it does a cosmopolitanism that takes place 'at home', within our families and neighbourhoods, where the 'libidinal economies of identification and desire' can give rise to 'more inclusive experiences of belonging'.[29] Arguably, the articulation of such a visceral cosmopolitanism can have profound implications for the constitution of the subject and for the construction of the cultural imaginary. It is at this level that *Re-Take of Amrita* makes its presence felt.

Re-Take of Amrita produces a notion of home and family developed within and through difference, rather than a closed domesticity whose sense of security is premised upon warding off 'others'. Difference is at the heart of the *Re-Take* project, most prominently cultural difference, sexual difference and generational difference. This is critical to the work's potential to contribute to the contemporary configuration of cosmopolitanism, where cosmopolitanism is conceived beyond the limits of privileged bourgeois consumption. Conventional, 'neo-liberal', cosmopolitanism is focused upon the individual,[30] where the individual is understood to be a transcendent subject or self-contained unit, keen to experience the frisson of 'the other' through a veil of pleasurable, commodified distance. By contrast, the multi-layered cosmopolitanism that Sundaram's photomontages materialise is founded in the proximate exchanges between members of this family and their circle, the collective, cross-cultural, intergenerational and inter-subjective dynamic that extends between people and places through affective engagement.

This is manifest more strongly by exploring the visual strategies deployed throughout *Re-Take of Amrita* than by reference to any single image within the volume. For example, many of the works focus upon combining images of the family members where their individual poses mirror one another or where they can be juxtaposed to suggest a dialogue or conversation. There are also many images in which a relay of looks connect the figures with one another and, significantly, with us, as we view the montages. We are invited into a conversation with the works just as we are invited into this family's home. But perhaps the most striking feature of the visual exchange

demonstrated within the work is the complex imbrication of subject and object positions across gender norms. The two individuals most frequently imaged in the project are Umrao Singh and his elder daughter, Amrita. Both father and daughter were makers of images; each, in these works, is the active subject and imaged object of the look, a look that is both attentive and proximate.

Throughout the volume, pictures of Amrita's own paintings, many of young Indian and European women, appear montaged with Umrao Singh's photographs of the artist. Significantly, she is shown variously in the act of painting, seated in her studio and with her works, and engaging with her fellow artists from the École des Beaux Arts. She is both the active and passive bearer of the look. Umrao Singh, too, appears in the volume, with his camera and telescope technically enhancing his sight, but also as the object of our attention, in elegant clothing and, more powerfully, dressed only in a wrapped loincloth as he practices yoga, revealing a strong and supple body to the camera. Like Amrita, he is both the subject and object of the look. Whilst this interplay between sexed subjects and gendered objects might appear simple, I would suggest that, when produced across such a range of images and activities, it engenders a powerful affective visuality premised upon an inter-subjective identification with difference.

The power of the visual in this context resides in its particular, quotidian quality; this is not a generalised overview or a distanced, disembodied and 'mastering' gaze, but a form of specific, attentive looking, capable of identifying and engaging with others. The differences of sex, age, and ethnic and cultural origin articulated by *Re-Take of Amrita* produce the very conditions for an embodied, inter-subjective exchange, such that the 'individual' can no longer be understood as alienated from, or existing in opposition to, other subjects in the world. The father and daughter exchange the look, and in so doing, emerge as subjects embedded within a sociality marked by difference. And, if we are to take seriously the logic of a visceral cosmopolitanism, then the embodied, empathic visuality capable of producing subjects with/in their encounters with others begins at home.

The conversations with/in difference that characterise *Re-Take* emerge further through another set of significant exchanges in the visual – namely, the exchanges between analogue and digital, painting and photomontage. These exchanges are precisely configured to set up a conversation between modernism, its legacy in contemporary practice and the question of the 'original'. Again, for Sundaram, this conversation begins at home.

Amrita Sher-Gil was a pivotal figure in the development of Indian modernism and her work is now well-known to an international audience in this context. Her nephew, Sundaram, belongs to the next generation; trained in India and in England, he began his career as a sculptor and has moved, increasingly, toward installation and site-specific work that places him firmly within the transnational arena of contemporary art practice. There is a cross-generational conversation taking place within *Re-Take* that connects

Sundaram with Amrita across times, places and the vicissitudes of intellectual categories such as 'modern' and 'contemporary' art. In addition, *Re-Take of Amrita* articulates a critical conversation between the analogue 'original' – the archival images taken by Umrao Singh – and their digital mediation in the hands of his grandson, Sundaram. Analogue and digital are ciphers for intergenerational exchange and the processes through which emergent configurations of home, family, identity and community might appear. Umrao Singh and his photographs become at once the indexical origin of the family/home and a demonstration of the futility of seeking a singular, fixed locus for identity; the small boy taught by his grandfather to use the camera shifts the focal point, confounding a linear temporality that assumes too simply that the past is the firm foundation of the present.

The digital photograph *Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future*[31] refers explicitly to time, to the imaginative exercise of recollecting the past and envisaging the future [colour plate 7]. This is a temporal exchange that is both topographical and open-ended. The sources of the image were four photographs: Indira in Paris, Marie Antoinette in Lahore and Amrita in Bombay (photographed by Karl Khandalavala), brought together with a central self-portrait of Umrao Singh in his study in Paris. The figures and the objects in the space construct a particular topography of home as both plurilocal and, significantly, multi-temporal. The analogue images derive from 1912 and the 1930s, but the gestures, dress and poses of the figures, in addition to the objects so prominently displayed in the interior, set up a much more complex spatio-temporal exchange at the point of the digital image. For example, Indira and Marie Antoinette, separated by a period of nearly two decades, each adopt a stereotypically 'feminine' pose referencing historical conventions in European painting – Indira holds a cat and her mother reads a letter. By contrast, Amrita wears traditional Indian dress, as does Umrao Singh, whose posture is reminiscent of the thinker or melancholy.[32] Books and papers litter the desk, placed alongside a typewriter with a partially typed page held in its carriage.

The scene suggests that we have caught the individuals in deep thought, Indira and Marie Antoinette engaging our look, Amrita and her father maintaining their inward gaze. This space, then, becomes a powerful nexus between the past and the present, the European and the Indian, tradition and change and, importantly, outward-looking social engagement and the power of individual imagination. The work constructs a plurilocal home that is fully embedded within the wider world and offers subjects the space in which to imagine a future as yet not determined. Remembering the past is not an exercise in futility when it enables us to look to the future.

Returning to the work of Iris Marion Young at this point is a useful way to pursue the ramifications of this line of thought. Young's counter to home-making as a feminised form of immanent drudgery pivoted upon a notion of home-making as future-oriented. Critically, she differentiated between 'meaningful preservation' and preservation as 'nostalgia'. Nostalgia, she

argued, simply clings to the past, but 'meaningful preservation' is open to the future, to the new, since it combines tending to the material traces of the past with continually interrogating and reworking their meanings in the present.[33] Meaningful preservation is a form of home-making allied to foundation as the act of introducing something new.

These future-oriented home-making activities link us beyond ourselves to others, they enable us to establish, to found, a vital and dynamic sense of 'community'. *Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future*, establishes the home/family through open-ness, through exchanges across and between differences of time, place, history and culture. This is home as something that one works at, rather than is given – it is the opposite of those xenophobic, genocidal definitions of home, family and community as a fortress against difference and change. We make homes, we make families, and we make our identities in and through affective, inter-subjective processes, processes that are also constitutive of any sense we might have of community.

Not surprisingly, reconfiguring the connections between home, identity and community has been central to the work of transnational feminist scholars who see this as a significant political step toward the recognition of difference in a global world. In these terms, homes and subjects are plurilocal and in process, and the material conditions that enable identities and communities to emerge are dynamic. As Irene Gedalof argued:

> 'Home' is produced through a constant process of adjustment, transformation, negotiation, redefinition – a never-ending, ongoing work to reproduce the appearance of stability and fixity that is part of the imagined community, whether that community is being thought about in terms of nation, ethnicity, race, religion, etc.[34]

If our foundations are figured as dynamic ground, then our homes are constantly negotiated, redefined and, moreover, open to difference. A visceral cosmopolitanism such as the one that is proposed through *Re-Take of Amrita* enables us to imagine our homes, identities and communities as spaces of inter-subjective engagements with others. Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have argued compellingly for this notion of community as a political necessity; as they wrote:

> Community, then, is the product of work, of struggle; it is inherently unstable, contextual; it has to be constantly reevaluated in relation to critical political priorities; and it is the product of interpretation, interpretation based on an attention to history, to the concrete, to … subjugated knowledges.[35]

The ramifications of this are profound. The cosmopolitan imagination opened by art's engagement with the processes of making oneself 'at home

everywhere' goes beyond the argument that contemporary art just moves from one place to another, each time invented as a new elite commodity. Rather, the work explored here provides the foundation for thinking through the movement of embodied, located subjects beyond the cipher of 'rootlessness'. It is a commitment to the daily labour of making art, making home, making community; it inspires us to participate rather than allow ourselves to be 'participated'.

Threshold – infinite generosity

Threshold – doorway; the portal through which you enter or leave a building

Threshold – the limit of sense perception

Threshold – the point of demarcation in passing from one state to another; a change of state, a transformation

Widowed houses

Between 1992 and 1994, Doris Salcedo produced a series of six works, collectively entitled *La Casa Viuda*, the 'widowed house'. *La Casa Viuda* refers literally and figuratively to the threshold, both in its inception and in its materiality. The works in the series are composite structures, consisting of doorways intersected by fragments of domestic furniture; in *La Casa Viuda I*, for example, the seat and legs of a chair, in *La Casa Viuda II*, a section from a wardrobe. These composite structures are further marked by traces of corporeal inhabitation, etched across their surfaces and embedded within their frames: an incision in the top of the wardrobe in *La Casa Viuda II* is filled with bone, while a bevelled edge at its front yields to a shard of fabric and a small zipper. Thus refashioned, the doorways of *La Casa Viuda* suggest the possibility of entering or leaving a house, but refuse this by means of strange juxtapositions of scale, elevation and material. Yet the threshold qualities of the series are not diminished by this; the works are determined by an internal exchange between found and facture, a point of demarcation between the 'given' nature of domestic objects and the 'fabrication' of works of art, that can transform our familiarity with the everyday into an affective encounter with difference. In each work of *La Casa Viuda*, we are invited to explore a charged seam, to engage bodily with a physical change of state from one material to another. The negated doorways of the works are thus reconfigured as threshold states of sensory transformation.

Figure 2.1 Doris Salcedo, *La Casa Viuda VI* (1995)

La Casa Viuda was produced in response to a different invocation of the threshold, namely, thresholds crossed by political violence in Colombia. Colombia has been subject to armed civil unrest, factional fighting and extreme forms of political brutality for over 40 years. One of the most devastating phenomena of this violence is the systematic 'disappearance' of citizens who dare to resist state oppression and localised paramilitary power. Salcedo produced *La Casa Viuda* after a period of travelling to rural areas in Colombia with human rights groups to hear the testimony of families whose loved ones had been 'disappeared'. Mainly women and children, their tales were traumatic, fragmentary stories of homes being violated, their thresholds over-run – in one case, a story was related by a young girl of opening the door of her home to her father's murderers.[1]

The devastation wrought by decades of internal state violence and the loss of generations of citizens is more than economic or political – its effects tear at the fabric of the subject and the very possibility of social engagement. In writing about the situation of the many itinerant survivors now existing at the margins of Colombia's major cities in the vain hope of locating their disappeared relatives, Charles Merewether described this loss of subjective cohesion eloquently as 'living on the threshold of dispersal and dissolution'.[2]

It would be hard to deny the power of Salcedo's work to capture a sense of the situation in Colombia and bring it to an international audience. *La Casa Viuda*, in addition to her *Untitled* wardrobe works from the 1990s and the now well-known *Atrabiliarios* (1992) and *Unland* series (1998), have been installed in major shows throughout the world and purchased for important international collections, and are the subject of a wide-ranging critical literature.[3] Indeed, a dominant reading of Salcedo's work has now emerged through this extensive exposure, one connected with particular concepts of memory, trauma, the body and political violence. Where the literature attends closely to the particular ability of Salcedo's work to, for instance, 'name violence'[4] and counter the anonymity and amnesia of systematic state oppression, 'foreshorten time',[5] bridging the gulf between the immediate experience of the spectator in the gallery and the distant evocation of the disappeared in Colombia, or connect 'individual memory and collective historical consciousness',[6] it attests to the efficacy of the work to inspire challenging and thoughtful engagements with politics, aesthetics and materiality.

However, the extent to which Salcedo has been successful in mapping her practice onto the metropolitan centres of the global art market is matched by the extent to which a generalised set of conventions have become the recognised response to her work and this, rather than making it more accessible to critical engagement, occludes the work's greatest potential to rethink the limits of politics, ethics and art in a globalised world. In particular, the conventional reads of Salcedo's work tend to reinstate very basic assumptions concerning authorial intention, social 'context' and representation (of the body, of memory, of trauma) as the guarantors of the works' meaning. That is, *La Casa Viuda* is political because Salcedo says it is; it is 'about' the violence and trauma in Colombia because we are told about those things in accompanying contextual blurbs, and it 'depicts' traumatic memory because it represents the narratives recalled by traumatised survivors. By contrast, I would argue that these forms of interpretation themselves embed binary oppositions between self and other, past and present, domestic and foreign, at the very heart of the work, foreclosing its most politically effective, and ethically affective, elements. I would further suggest that it is at the point of the threshold that these binary oppositions can be seen and undone toward very different ends.

Conceiving the threshold as a borderline between two fixed places or states creates the conditions for oppositional forms of 'originary violence' to emerge.

If the self and the other, or the domestic and the foreign, are fixed categories, separated by a defined border, then every encounter between them is, by definition, a threshold crossed by violence, a movement from one 'anterior pure' to another. Whilst this notion of the originary violence at the heart of subjectivity[7] has been a dominant feature of definitions of autonomous, transcendent selfhood in post-Enlightenment thought, it is by no means the only way in which subjectivity can be conceived, or made operative, through social, political, ethical and aesthetic agency.

If, by contrast, we think through the threshold as a transformative state, a process of liminal engagement or a segue, it becomes a locus of possibility rather than a dead marker between two irrevocably opposed forms. As Leslie Adelson argued in 'Against Between: A Manifesto', working with border concepts has a habit of reinforcing an impotent in-between, forever caught in the heated duel of dualism, while the figure of the threshold as a 'transitional space' can unfurl this oppositional logic altogether.[8] It is this that convinces me that Rhea Anastas' incisive critical comment on Salcedo's *Unland* may well prefigure an important renegotiation of *La Casa Viuda*: ' … if they depict anything, it is a threshold or a dynamic state'.[9]

La Casa Viuda does not depict the political situation in Colombia or the wider inequities of power exacerbated by the processes of globalisation; neither is it a representation of memory, trauma or the body. Rather, it mobilises the vital interconnections between all these terms (and others) by producing a threshold state and enabling participant-spectators to inhabit it. Exploring *La Casa Viuda* as a threshold state, rather than a representation of thresholds, enables a dynamic, process-based, participatory mode of interpretation to be developed.

Obviously, this provides a counter to the less critical forms of conventional interpretation described above, premised as they are upon given contexts and simplistic assertions of authorial intent, but it also has much more radical ramifications for thinking subjectivity *in* and *as* sociality, as an embedded, phenomenological condition of 'response-ability'. And, as Kelly Oliver has argued, '(t)here is a direct connection between the response-ability of subjectivity and ethical and political responsibility'.[10] I would suggest that connections between subjective 'response-ability' and social, political and ethical responsibility can be made operative by artworks that provide access to threshold sensory states and, moreover, that the fully-sensory subject thus interpellated is founded not in originary violence, but in interconnection with other subjects in the world with whom we share pressing concerns. Enabling this link between global politics, ethics and aesthetics to emerge at the level of the fully-social subject is at the heart of contemporary art's articulation of a cosmopolitan project. Indeed, I would argue that if art is in any way effective in its cosmopolitan ethical address to the political conditions of globalisation, it is in mobilising and directing this dual sense of

response-ability/responsibility; it is here that an engagement with the threshold comes into its own.

How might one dwell within the thresholds of *La Casa Viuda*, and to what end? At one level, this question can be answered by returning to the charged seams, the crossing points within each work in the series that materialise a physical change of state. In *La Casa Viuda IV*, for instance, a door connects with the curved armature of a bedstead, forming an enclosure, nearly an embrace. Incised into the wood of the door are two bones and, falling both across and within its surface, are traces of a lace curtain or, perhaps, the faded remnant of a woman's garment. At no point is there a simple or easy boundary between these composite elements; there is no bridge between each to maintain its previous status unchanged. Rather, the power of the object resides in the transformations, the segues, that mark the limits of the material, spatial and conceptual traces to which we bear witness. The work is in process, becoming-other, before our eyes.

Arguably, the perceptual attention needed to explore these threshold states forms a vital part of their transformation; they are mutable because we, as sensitive perceptual/cognitive instruments, participate in the processes they substantiate. That is, we must engage modes of perception as segues between sharp sensory divides to participate in this work; we cannot, for example, maintain a distanced, disembodied mode of viewing, but rather the complex articulations of surface and depth, the tactile qualities of the mutable materials and the proximate sight-lines engage our whole body in a haptic exploration of the threshold.

These proximate, visceral encounters at the limits of sensibility form but one aspect of our inhabitation of the thresholds of *La Casa Viuda*. Also necessary to participate in the work is a mode of ambulatory realisation; *La Casa Viuda* consists of a series of pieces that, when installed, set up a variety of potential navigational routes, and each piece can be explored from a number of different angles.[11] The work is thus in no way static, and our sensory engagement with it requires an analogous movement in and through space. *La Casa Viuda* therefore brings us to our senses in a powerful modulation between multi-sensory, proximate attention and ambulatory proprioception – absolute detail and the wider frame. It might be argued that many multi-sensory installations operate in this way, and thus that this work offers no particular insight into the interrelationship between art, subjective response-ability and moral or political responsibility. I am not suggesting that this work is alone in its affective properties, nor that we do not have our sensory limits tested and developed by other works of art. Rather, I am arguing that the threshold quality of attenuated sensory participation offered by *La Casa Viuda* is intrinsic to its potential to signify in the wider frame of global politics against the limits of an assimilative moral logic. To interrogate that further, it is necessary to return to the question of representation, trauma and memory.

If *La Casa Viuda* can be said to materialise, rather than represent, thresholds, it might also be argued that it does not depict memory, trauma and the body, but performs them. The corporeal territory of remembering is evoked by the perceptual modulation between proximate attention and proprioception in two ways. First, this modulation is akin to the alternation between episodic and semantic memory fundamental to subjectivity; and second, it bears the features of what Edward Casey termed 'body memory' in his closely-argued phenomenological study *Remembering*.[12] In cognitive psychology, episodic memory refers to the specific and particular memories we gain from personal experience – the memory derived from my body coming into contact with people, objects and events in the world. By contrast, semantic memory may not have this corporeal immediacy, but provides mnemonic context – my memory of the narratives told to me by my friends and family or learned in school that set my personal episodic memories into a wider, intelligible frame. Significantly, it is not possible to operate as a coherent subject without both of these modes, and there is no simple border between them; they are thresholds of memory without which we would have no sense of selfhood, and these thresholds embed the self fully within the social.

For Casey, body memory is not a memory of the body, it is not representational. Rather, he distinguishes between three operations of corporeal remembering: habitual, traumatic and erotic.[13] Habitual body memory is fundamentally orienting – the body's remembering situates us in space and time as we undertake habitual activities such as walking, swimming, driving or playing an instrument. The phenomenology of habitual body memory is thus linked to the properties of orientation that characterise proprioception: a fully-sensory, situated subject taking up a position within the world. Traumatic body memory, however, is fragmentary; we experience detailed and isolated mnemonic events, unable to be rendered coherent whilst the trauma remains. This contrasts sharply with erotic body memory, which may also originate in a fleeting and fragmentary bodily experience (such as a touch on the shoulder), but which, through pleasure, can be transformed into a coherent corporeal remembering, linked with anticipation and a future direction for the subject.

The subject who participates in the threshold states of sensory engagement mapped out by *La Casa Viuda* negotiates the complex phenomenological terrain of memory [colour plate 8]. We recognise the found objects and recall domestic interiors, we circumnavigate the installation through our habitual knowledge of the scale and mass of the doorways and the furnishings. Our attention is drawn to an extreme juxtaposition between found and facture, temporarily our bodies are stopped, remembering is fragmented, the threshold is violated. But an extraordinary material transformation occupies us; our pleasure in residing within this threshold replaces the abyss of traumatised remembering with a fuller, corporeal engagement with the work, and we move on. The power of Salcedo's work is that her thresholds do not abandon participants in the depths of traumatic memory, but provide ways to reinstate the

corporeal cohesion of the enworlded subject. In this way, response-ability meets responsibility at what Kaja Silverman calls 'the threshold of the visible world', a world inhabited by fully social, fully sensory subjects.[14]

The House of My Father

The embodied and embedded subjectivity described here is indebted to the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who in his later work eloquently conceptualised 'intercorporiety', 'reversibility' and the 'transitivity from one body to another'.[15] In her reading of *The Visible and the Invisible*, Kelly Oliver further developed Merleau-Ponty's exploration of flesh through what I would term a shift from *object* to *process*:

> The thickness of the flesh guarantees relations, while the skin ensures that we can distinguish our experience from the other's. Yet since the flesh and skin are not objects but synergetic, we are never cut off from the other. The skin is a boundary, but a permeable boundary.[16]

In this formulation, the skin is not an object, but the threshold of embodied subjectivity. As such, 'synergetic' flesh and skin yield to yet another extension of the threshold as process, namely the corporeal constitution of the subject in and though sociality. This permeable threshold was precisely configured by the late Donald Rodney in his work from 1996–97, *In the House of My Father*. While the work draws literal connections between dwelling and corporeality – as an image of a house constructed from skin – it does more than that, articulating the inter-relationships between embodied subjects and the material conditions of history.

   In the House of My Father is a large colour photograph (on paper, mounted on aluminium) showing Rodney's upturned palm, on which rests a tiny 'house' made from fragments of his own skin, delicately pinned together. It is a moving depiction; a man's open hand cradling a fragile house, the imaged skin-to-skin contact inviting a corollary imagined kinaesthetic response from its viewers. The title suggests the intimacy of familial lineage[17] and the memory of home, whilst the translucency of the walls of the house remind us of the permeability of flesh, its easily wounded porosity meeting its sensuous surface qualities in an erotic, tactile exchange.

   The context of the photograph's production and first installation are significant to the question of the permeability of the skin threshold and the ability of the work to materialise the corporeal processes of inter-subjectivity. *In the House of My Father* was exhibited in Rodney's last major show, *Nine Nights in Eldorado* (1997), an exhibition dedicated to Rodney's father, one of the many Afro-Caribbean immigrants to arrive in Britain at the end of the 1950s. The artist further referenced his family in the show by entitling the small skin house itself (shown as an object in a glass case) as *Mother, Sister,*

Figure 2.2 Donald Rodney, *In the House of My Father* (1996–97)

Father, Brother. The skin fragments used to fabricate the 'house' were taken from skin grafts Rodney had during the latter stages of treatment for sickle-cell anaemia, a disease particularly associated with the African diaspora, and that which claimed his life in 1998. The photograph, object and their titles are at once utterly personal and absolutely social. Rodney's failing flesh and the skin of his fashioned 'home' mark the synergistic threshold of intercorporeal subjectivity, always and already embedded with/in the world. This is not a masculinity inscribed by the fiction of self-generative autonomy, nor of fixed and impenetrable boundaries between the self and others. Rather, Rodney's work explored his identity as a threshold state, one defined by embodied exchange, or what Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd have elsewhere called 'transindividuality'.[18]

As Gatens and Lloyd argued, there are fundamental links between the constitution of the subject as corporeal/social and moral and political responsibility:

> … 'transindividuality' can help us understand the temporal dimension
> of collective responsibility … The determining of our multiple identities

involves both past and present – memory and imagination as well as pre-
sent perception. In understanding how our past continues in our present
we understand also the demands of responsibility for the past we carry
with us, […] not because of what we as individuals have done, but
because of what we are.[19]

The connections Gatens and Lloyd made between the 'transindividual' subject,
the material conditions of history and collective responsibility are compelling.
Their notion of a subject as 'transindividual', as crossing seemingly fixed
boundaries between discrete, 'individual' selves, is profoundly social and
responsible. In addition, their wider argument, derived from reworking
Spinoza's theories of imagination, locates the facility of this responsibility in
the spatio-temporal exchange between 'memory and imagination as well
as present perception'. In this sense, I would argue that their understanding
of collective responsibility is in fact aesthetic, premised upon a notion of
'response-ability', and that this has important ramifications for exploring the
thresholds materialised by works of art.

The upshot of these connections is to acknowledge that history and memory
materially locate us, without abandoning the potential for transformation
offered by imagination. Indeed, as Edward Casey contended, imagining
'possibilises' the future, it opens us not just to random or alternative ideas, but
to the new, to genuine change and difference.[20] If the threshold of Rodney's
skin was marked by the scars of Britain's colonial past and its legacy of
racism, it also bore his parents' hope for the future as they came to the UK
and raised a new generation of Black Britons. *In the House of My Father* looks
both back and forward, is both painful and beautiful, mindful of history, yet
cognisant of the transformative potential of the anticipated future. In this way,
it mobilises a perceptual and cognitive threshold state, a segue linking, rather
than opposing, memory/past with imagination/future. And this is a critical
threshold for any consideration of art's engagement with ethical and political
agency. As Oliver argued: 'In order to imagine the present impossibilities
becoming possible in the future, we need to imagine them as possible in the
past; the future opens onto otherness only insofar as the past does too'.[21]

Despite the centrality of the image of an open-doored 'house', Rodney's
work does not represent a threshold, but performs one. For the viewer, *In
the House of My Father* materialises an imaginative threshold through
kinaesthesia and haptic visuality.[22] While it is impossible to be in another's
skin, to reside within the house that Rodney created from his own flesh, the
work nonetheless compels us to engage through our bodies. It invokes tactility
in the most primary sense – skin against skin. Its powerful haptic agency
works by engendering our sense memory of touch and, through that threshold
of synergetic skin, our imaginative extension into the social realm through
tactile exchange with embodied others. The work touches us, and we dwell in
it, in the stronger senses of those terms.

What I am suggesting here is that our aesthetic response to this work engenders the possibility of an ethical response to others, and that this happens at the point of affective exchange, the threshold, between memory and imagination. Without overstating the power of imagination to change the world, I would argue, along the lines of the Antillean theorist Edouard Glissant, that relational subjectivity and imagination are crucial to political transformation and that aesthetics plays a vital role in this arena. As he wrote in his *Poetics of Relation*:

> No imagination helps avert destitution in reality, none can oppose oppressions or sustain those who 'withstand' in body or spirit. But imagination changes mentalities, however slowly it may go about this … [And], if the imaginary carries us from thinking about this world to thinking about the universe, we can conceive that aesthetics, by means of which we make our imaginary concrete, with the opposite intention, always brings us back from the infinities of the universe to the definable poetics of our world.[23]

For Glissant, aesthetics completes a cycle from the particular to the universal and back again, or, extending his thinking, an endless modulation, through present perception, between memory and the concrete past to imagination and the possible future. What interests me most in Glissant's formulation is the interchange, rather than opposition, between his terms, such that the 'infinities of the universe' and the 'concrete' imaginary of our world are intertwined. For me, this configuration of terms is resonant with the critical imbrication of political and moral agency developed in recent feminist philosophy, an area of scholarly work crucial to a productive transformation of politics, ethics and subjectivity in their specific connection to an enlarged sense of aesthetics. In particular, a number of feminist scholars have sought to move beyond the binary logic that pits 'justice' against 'care', and in so doing, they have configured an expanded and integral inter-relationship between political and moral economies, reciprocity and generosity, universal principles and contextual decisions. Before exploring the implications of this in thinking with contemporary art, it is instructive briefly to survey the justice/care debate.

Feminist moral philosophers, such as Carol Gilligan, initially used an ethic of care to decentre the predominance of masculine-normative contractarian ethics focused upon first principles that assume an essential equality between all individuals. It will suffice here to remember that, on this model, 'justice' was aligned with contractarian ethics and notions of rights, duties and reciprocity between autonomous, transcendent subjects, while 'care' was associated with extra-legislative empathic relations between particular persons. Justice therefore assumed universal moral imperatives, while care rested on particulars. In one sense, the dualism underpinning the opposition between justice and care is the self-same logic as that which splinters the universal from the particular. The ethical dilemmas that ensue from understanding these

categories as exclusive and opposed are obvious – the former insists upon ethical action, but action within an economy of the same in which critical differences between individuals and circumstances cannot be negotiated, while the latter is able to recognise difference and notions of giving without equivalent return, but risks moral relativism and inertia (lack of an imperative to act). I would argue further that justice rests on memory, on reciprocating past acts, while generosity, like imagination, extends toward the future, making social relationships possible. Opposed, they never enable the emergence of an ethical future.

Scholars such as Grace Clement and Fiona Robinson have renegotiated the simple justice/care binary in compelling ways. Clement refutes the notion that justice and care are competitors, exploring them as partners, each expanding the other in important senses. Key amongst these is the expansion of 'the account of obligations beyond the contractual model', toward recognising 'responsibility'.[24] Robinson develops what she calls a 'critical ethics of care', and examines the interpellation of the responsible moral subject.[25] Significantly, she takes up the question of autonomy in her argument, suggesting that relational subjectivity need not be seen as lacking ethical agency:

> … care and justice are no longer fixed in a dichotomous relationship; indeed, it is a new kind of moral thinking in which a strong sense of self goes hand in hand with the valuing of human attachment and the focus on abstract, impersonal, distant relations is replaced by a focus on real, concrete, particular relations.[26]

The moral subject described here is both just and generous; more strongly, unravelling the justice/care dichotomy precisely enables responsible/response-able moral agency to emerge. But to whom is this subject responsible?

In a related argument, Seyla Benhabib reconfigured the universal to articulate the concept of 'communicative discourse ethics', arguing:

> My goal is to situate reason and the moral self more decisively in contexts of gender and community, while insisting upon the discursive power of individuals to challenge such situatedness in the name of universalistic principles, future identities and as yet undiscovered communities.[27]

In seeking to situate the moral self in this way, and to dispel the ontological basis of the opposition between justice and care, Benhabib deconstructed the powerful fiction of 'generalised' and 'concrete' others – those who call forth our moral responsibility. Simply, generalised others are not, they are the same; communicative discourse ethics combines the constraints of justice with the responsibility of care through recognising the concrete differences of situated others.

It is significant that this body of thought moves beyond a choice between justice and care, contractual reciprocity and generosity, generalised and concrete others; the logic is marked not by binary exclusion, but by dialogic exchange and inclusion. Returning to the passage by Glissant in light of this thinking enables us to expand upon the moral and political implications of his notion of imagination and aesthetics. Connecting the universal with the concrete in and through imagination as a socially-transformative force, aesthetics becomes a primary site for the materialisation of a cosmopolitan ethics in a global world. And it is toward this project that the figure of the threshold contributes so powerfully.

It is useful here to look again at *La Casa Viuda* and, in particular, its simultaneous invocation of general and concrete others. *La Casa Viuda* was derived from specific accounts of political violence in Colombia, and it is significant that this information is always made available to viewers of the work. In one sense, the work cannot be approached without engaging with a resonance, a trace, from these concrete others. Clearly, however, the finished series is not illustrative of these narratives, nor does it represent the disappeared or their surviving families in any literal way. Moreover, the works are most frequently seen outside Colombia, in places where there is little or no possibility to have had any specific experiences of the individuals concerned, places where the disappeared become, necessarily, generalised others. These facts require an explicit account of what it means to interpret the works in terms of organised state violence in Colombia. All too often, the link is assumed by an uncritical account of context and authorial intent: the artist tells us how the works were made and we are given the details of the socio-historic frame and, alas, a political interpretation is made – we know what the work is about.

Resisting the temptation to move so swiftly to determine meaning is not easy, but it is productive. If we are not satisfied with intention and context guaranteeing meaning in this way, then how does the work relate to the disappeared? How does this work act ethically to connect us with general and concrete others? I would suggest that *La Casa Viuda* is an affective exploration of the imaginative modulation between the universal and particular necessary to the emergence of a cosmopolitan ethics in a globalised world. That is, the work's aesthetic strategies provide the possibility of an imaginative engagement with others, always both concrete and generalised, to compel us in our response-ability toward ethical and political responsibility. And in this way, the work locates us beyond the dissolution of subjectivity and sociality effected by long-term political violence.

La Casa Viuda calls to us materially in its transformations of the everyday, its mediation of domesticity through found and facture. The works' material qualities are at once overwhelmingly familiar, close, connected to us and, at the same time, transformed, estranged, utterly unlike. We reside between the recognition of similitude and ineffable difference. If we explore the narratives

of political violence in Colombia through this affective call to our bodies, they cease to determine the meaning of the work (or impel us toward fixed meaning altogether) and rather, enter into a corporeal dialogue with it. That is, the narratives themselves can be seen to reside at the nexus of memory and imagination, generalised and concrete otherness – these stories are unbearably close, personal and particular, yet their repetition and their transformation in and through the resolute refusal of representation renders them symbols of violence beyond a singular locus. Hence they touch us, but do not leave us inert.

It must be remembered at this point that my argument is concerned with possibility, not prescription; I do not think that *La Casa Viuda* or *In the House of My Father* will *necessarily* engage every participant–spectator in the same way, nor am I arguing that they should enforce responsibility as reciprocity. I am suggesting rather that they engender the affective conditions capable of interpellating a type of moral agency premised upon intercorporeal engagement with others in the world – a response-able, embodied, ethical cosmopolitan subjectivity.

I am interested in taking seriously the fact that artworks can offer spaces to us that may be taken up imaginatively, that may enable us to dwell at the threshold of response-ability and responsibility, and thus effect a change at the level of subjectivity that has the potential to transform social and political life in material ways. It is not my premise that thinking with art in this way will provide a definitive reading/meaning for the work. The threshold is here being explored as a figuration, a conceptual structure capable of connecting a range of critical interrogations of subjectivity, location and power. As a figuration, the threshold also marks the site of my critical act; the segue between memory and imagination that constructs the possibility of an embodied cosmopolitan ethics in the relationship between justice and care resides as much within the performance of this text as it does in the engagement with the artworks. Indeed, they are mutually constituted in the figuration. In this sense, I would argue that I am exploring the inter-relationship between ethics and aesthetics through the infinity of the gift.[28]

There are myriad theories of the gift, and while this is not the place to examine that literature in detail, it is important that I am clear about my own use of this complex cipher here. First, many have argued that gifts are not just contractual forms of exchange, but markers of generosity that establish social relations.[29] In general terms, and well aware of Jacques Derrida's critique of the gift as delayed exchange,[30] I would affirm the alignment of the gift and generosity with a notion of social interaction beyond contractual reciprocity. Moreover, whilst Derrida's introduction of radical 'forgetfulness' into the debate marks the gift as a virtual impossibility (to 'recognise' it is to destroy it, since that reinstates it within a relationship of exchange by 'returning' it, even if not in material terms), there is another strand of his thought centred on forgiveness that offers a related insight and a possible way of thinking through 'impossibilities' that do, somehow, occur. In 2001, in response to

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation hearings, Derrida wrote a short, provocative essay on forgiveness.[31] Arguing strongly against the ability of any state to truly 'forgive', rather than simply provide amnesty (via amnesia – a radical forgetfulness), acquittal or the 'political therapy of reconciliation',[32] Derrida suggested that forgiveness can only be such when the *unforgivable is forgiven*, when the impossible occurs, when, I would suggest, we are in the realm of the infinite gift. What is fascinating about this text is that Derrida argues the (all but) impossibility of forgiveness as such, but yet cannot deny that this extraordinary activity happens, that survivors of the unforgivable forgive. That paradox is central to my understanding of the gift; giving happens, generosity occurs, but these occurrences are not simply recuperable within the contractarian logic of commodity exchange.

At this point, Paul Ricoeur's conception of the gift is instructive, in two senses. First, he has argued for an explicit connection between forgiveness and the gift, suggesting that forgiveness engages the 'poetics' of the moral life.[33] Second, he has invoked a particular linguistic construction of the gift as a rejection of a utilitarian 'giving' in favour of a form of generosity engendered by an ethical commitment to others that is future-oriented. In his telling turn of phrase, the gift moves from the logic of exchange/demand, 'I give so that you will give', to an open-ended construction: 'Give because it has been given you'.[34] In this way, Ricoeur's ideas are central to my invocation of the gift here as 'infinite'; gifts elude the backward movement of contractual exchange (return) to establish social relations open to the possibilities of the future, the new and the different.

This configuration of the gift has an intrinsic relationship to the threshold as it is being developed here – not as a demarcation between two fixed states or entities, but as a transformative and profoundly affective locus of intercorporeal subjectivity. In her compelling work on embodiment, ethics and generosity, Rosalyn Diprose articulated the transformative power of gift-giving as ' … being given to others without deliberation in a field of inter-corporeality, a being given that constitutes the self as affective and being affected, that constitutes social relations and that which is given in relation'.[35] Crucially, there is no protected 'anterior pure' in this model, no sense in which autonomous selves precede the act of giving or remain unchanged by it. Indeed, generosity, the gift, is that which predicates both sociality and the self, and these are not oppositional, but intimately interconnected. Moreover, for Diprose, generosity works at the level of affectivity, sensibility and carnal perception; not, she is at pains to add, as a kind of personal 'feeling', but as 'the production and transformation of the corporeal self through others. So understood, affectivity is also the domain of politics'.[36] This is why the threshold aesthetics of works such as *La Casa Viuda* and *In the House of My Father* are so compelling in this context, as they can enable the emergence of a cosmopolitan ethical imagination without negating the material histories and politics of globalisation.

But if the ethico-aesthetic locus of the gift has the potential to interpellate response-able/responsible subjects, it cannot compel them. More strongly, whilst I am arguing that transformations in subjectivity can occur through the agency of future-oriented generosity, I am not arguing that every work of art is a 'gift', and certainly not that Salcedo (or any other artist) 'gives us a gift'. That would return us to the co-opted logic of contract and not of generosity, which cannot be anticipated, returned or determined in such a way. Gifts are like imagination – open to the future possibility of the 'new'. Contracts are not. And this distinction underpins an important point about the agency of artworks in a global economy.

The houses of others

The distinctions between the economies characterised by the gift and the market are of critical importance to any exploration of contemporary art that takes seriously its power to signify productively within, and sometimes as a counter to, the global marketplace. Art is thoroughly embedded within global markets; it is a high-level commodity, moving along transnational trade lines between key metropolitan centres. Bi- and triennials replicate the circulation patterns of transnational capital, and the corollary 'regional redevelopment' projects that form in their wake. Time and again, global corporate partnerships are marked by an exchange of 'cultural capital' by means of the sponsorship of public art, exhibitions, collections and even museum/gallery construction.

But it is precisely the embeddedness of art within the global marketplace that lends it its potential to engage with pressing political and ethical questions concerning location, power and difference. Again, I am suggesting a threshold, a segue connecting, rather than bridging a chasm between, terms that have been conceived in opposition – the gift and the market, generosity and reciprocal exchange. The circulation of works of art and their means of production and presentation are within the world, within the market economy, but do not exist simply in bondage to hegemonic structures of meaning, knowledge or subjectivity. It is at the threshold of sensory perception and cognition that art *works* and, while affective agency may well be constrained by the material conditions through which it is produced, it is never wholly contained by them. Affective agency has transformative potential, the ability to take the material of the past and present and effect genuine change in the future, engage difference and engender the new. When it does this, the threshold state mobilises the gift from *within the market*. I would suggest that this material formulation provides a much stronger ethical imperative than an idealist formulation of the gift as a 'realm' outside or beyond the contingencies of the world in which we live, as some kind of platonic panacea.

A final turn to *La Casa Viuda* demonstrates the complex interweaving of the definite market and the infinite gift at the point of intention. *La Casa Viuda*

was produced as a series and shown as such; the modulation between close attention and ambulatory perception described above are premised upon the primary spectator–participant experience of the work as a series. However, individual pieces from *La Casa Viuda* have been purchased by major museum collections around the world, including Jerusalem's Israel Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. In permanent display conditions, it is possible to encounter fragments of *La Casa Viuda*, singular works, placed such that you cannot move around them, but are forced into a more static visual engagement. This engenders a different encounter and, arguably, a different response-ability. The works are still powerful markers of the disappeared, but, fractured from their collective body, they operate much more as memorials, stopping at the point of calling to memory without reinstating the proprioceptive level of coherent, transformative remembering that corporeally engages us with generalised and concrete others in the world.

Intention is critical here, but not the artist's intention in a limited sense (Salcedo meant this or that to be the case); rather, we have the combination of authorial intent (the works were intended as a series, shown in open configurations) and the *intentional* agency of the works within the world – the phenomenological intention of art. The way in which the works are available to us, their ability to engender particular spaces and affective states, is at the core of their intentional existence in the world. *La Casa Viuda* never exists outside the global art market, but some market conditions curtail its affective potential and limit its intentional agency, whilst others enable its generosity to emerge. In that sense, market conditions are significant, but not unilateral in their relationship to the gift economy.

A project that attempts to deal directly with these two economies, as they impact upon the question of ethical imagination and political force, is Monica Nador's house/painting project, now centred upon the Jardim Mirian Arte Club (JAMAC) located on the outskirts of São Paulo, Brazil. Nador was part of what has now come to be called 'Generation '80', that group of artists from Brazil who came to international attention during the late 1980s with their large-scale, 'decorative' painting practices. Critically, Nador was seen to be on the edge of that group,[37] pursuing a darker, more socially-conscious formalism. During the 1990s, Nador's work shifted away from studio-based painting designed exclusively for gallery consumption to encompass a monumental painting practice undertaken in economically-deprived domestic environments in central and South America. This work is a compelling instance of the ability of art to materialise an ethics premised upon the interaction between memory and imagination, justice and care, residing within the threshold.

In a literal sense, Nador's house/paintings could not have been produced without thresholds being crossed in acts of hospitality and dialogue, rather than violence and exclusion. For example, in a project she undertook on the

Figure 2.3 Monica Nador, Tijuana project, Mexico (2000)

outskirts of Tijuana, Mexico in 2000, Nador lived with local residents for a month, offering them her skills as a painter and a space in which to think about, discuss and imagine visual motifs, colours and patterns that meant something to them. This hospitality was returned by the residents, who offered Nador a temporary dwelling in their community, welcomed her into their homes, and shared with her the stories, objects and images they treasured. The designs, colours and locations of the finished works were negotiated between the artist and the residents: for example, some were on interior walls of the residents' houses; and some were external, ranging from a few motifs used to make a small pattern over a doorway or in the corner of a courtyard to large murals where patterns decorate the whole of a façade [colour plate 9].

In every case, the murals remain *in situ*, with the residents, and there is ample evidence that these are valued both as beautiful works of art and for their mnemonic power. The latter is critical to my thinking on the threshold, since it moves this practice beyond the limits of representation toward processes of remembering. The finished paintings are not representations of memories; the conditions of their production, combining acts of remembering, narrating and visualisation in an inter-subjective dialogue, locate the works differently. The motifs begin as fragments, drawn from the memories of the residents, but they do not remain fragmentary. Like erotic body

memories, they are generative fragments, mobilised through visual repetition and installation in familiar, domestic territory, crossed by residents in innumerable activities each day. As such, for their participant-makers, the painted surfaces act as corporeal mnemonics, aesthetic threshold-states, connecting memories of the past with imagined futures, transforming the everyday not by 'transcending' it, but by using its materiality to realise the possibility of change. Without oversimplifying or overstating the case, the residents in Tijuana have testified to the fact that engaging in this project enabled them to think beyond their daily struggle for existence and act on desires to change their circumstances – from improving their surroundings to reconnecting with distant relatives and friends.[38]

This impact is hardly surprising to anyone aware of 'new genre public art' or the histories of community/participatory arts practices, especially where they connect to feminist activist art.[39] The arts have long been used to empower marginalised individuals and groups, with greater or lesser success, and in many ways, Nador's recent projects fall neatly within these categories. However, what is interesting about Nador's practice is that it combines a critical participatory arts focus with a more conventional transnational art market presence; in that respect, it is a threshold practice. Its threshold links ethics with aesthetics, the local with the global, and the economy of the gift with the art market.

The question of community is central to Nador's house/painting projects, and it is significant that she does not begin with a preconceived or closed idea of the communities with whom she is engaging. This is not a case of an artist going to work with a group whose (fixed) identity is seen as a focal point for the project or who can be brought together around the centrality of an identity politic. Rather, it is the contingency of dwelling that is the starting point for the practice, a contingency that frequently testifies to the impact of economic globalisation on the notion of home, place and fixed identity. Nador's project operates by intervening in the everyday practices of inhabitation of a very diverse population, brought together in one space through the multiple and variable forces of economic migrancy. Any sense of 'community' is a discourse on migration, change and the mutability of identity.

The house/paintings that Nador and the residents produce are part of a practice of inhabitation, of inscribing meaning and value in and through contingency, not as a marker of constancy. In that sense, these works remind us of the etymology of 'ethics' as dwelling – both noun and verb. And, as Derrida put it succinctly, hospitality *is* ethics;[40] the mutual generosity between artist and resident produces the conditions of hospitality, of a practice of dwelling that connects the material force of the past with hope for the future. Taken in this context, the hospitality engendered by Nador's house/painting project is a cosmopolitan ethics, an engaged and generous practice of becoming 'at home' in the world.

Significantly, this generosity was not a 'gift' from the empowered metropolitan artist to the poor, displaced workers; rather, as the everyday was reconfigured through mutual forms of generosity, both Nador and the residents with whom she worked were transformed. In a simple sense, Nador's itinerant work with communities encouraged her to extend her political work and start an activist group in São Paulo, the Jardim Mirian Arte Club (JAMAC). JAMAC now has NGO status, as well as support from a major bank, to continue its work with art, education, discussion and community action in future. In addition, Nador has never ceased to have a career in the artworld at an international level. For reasons that will become clear, it is the latter of these activities that locates for me another crucial threshold within the house/painting projects.

Nador's house/painting work remains a formal painting practice; that is, Nador has not developed a 'community arts' and activism role in addition to an internationally-recognised art practice, as if the two modes of working were incompatible. Rather, she combines the two, bridging the gap between activism and contemporary painting through what could be called a threshold practice. Making this connection so emphatically is still unusual and difficult to maintain. Many community-participatory projects remain on the margins of international artworld/art market success, and artists who have a foot in both camps tend not to consolidate the different elements of their work so decisively. The gift economy effected through local hospitality and mutual generosity in Nador's house/painting has not removed the work from the transnational circuits of the art market and their manifestations in major exhibitions and institutions – indeed, Nador's Tijuana work was featured both in San Diego in 2000 and at Sydney's 2004 Biennale.

Crucial to the engagement with Nador's work at the international level is its presentation. The collaboration between the artist and the residents with whom she works is made evident, but is presented neither as documentary proof of an artist's community work nor as the work itself. Hence the collaboration does not become a fetishised object in the gallery, a kind of aestheticised encounter with distant impoverished others, represented to us by the artist, but rather is given as a point of dialogue with the paintings, a means by which to engage their mnemonic and semiotic signification. Nador does not speak for her collaborators; the works articulate the traces of dialogues between the artist and the residents that, placed into the spaces of galleries throughout the world, invite us to cross the thresholds of general and concrete others imaginatively.

It is in this sense that yet another kind of community emerges in this practice, and for me, a very different community than one usually associated with 'community arts'. These works confound the dichotomy between the local and the global as they are inscribed through an opposition between participatory arts practice, as material engagement with concrete others, and the international art market, as conceptual engagement with generalised others.

In negotiating these seemingly contradictory spheres, Nador's work inhabits the threshold that links them together through a newly-defined sense of response-ability/responsibility. It is the imbrication of the local with the global and the embeddedness of the gift within the market that provides a locus for transformative memory that does not seek an 'elsewhere', but imagines the here and now otherwise.

Plate 1 Do-Ho Suh, *348 West 22nd St., Apt. A, New York, NY 10011* (2000)

Plate 2 Zwelethu Mthethwa, *Untitled (from Interior series)* (2000)

Plate 3 Cecilia Parsberg and Eric Pauser, still from *I Can See the House*/*To Rachel* (2003)

Plate 4 Yin Xiuzhen, *Beijing* (2001) from the *Portable Cities* project

Plate 5 Yin Xiuzhen, *Yin Xiuzhen* (1998)

Plate 6 Vivan Sundaram *Box 3: Home* from *The Sher-Gil Archive* (1995–96)

Plate 7 Vivan Sundaram, *Remembering the Past, Looking to the Future* (2001)

Plate 8 Doris Salcedo, *La Casa Viuda III* (1994)

Plate 9 Monica Nador, Tijuana project (2000)

Plate 10 Christine Borland, *English Family China* (1998) detail
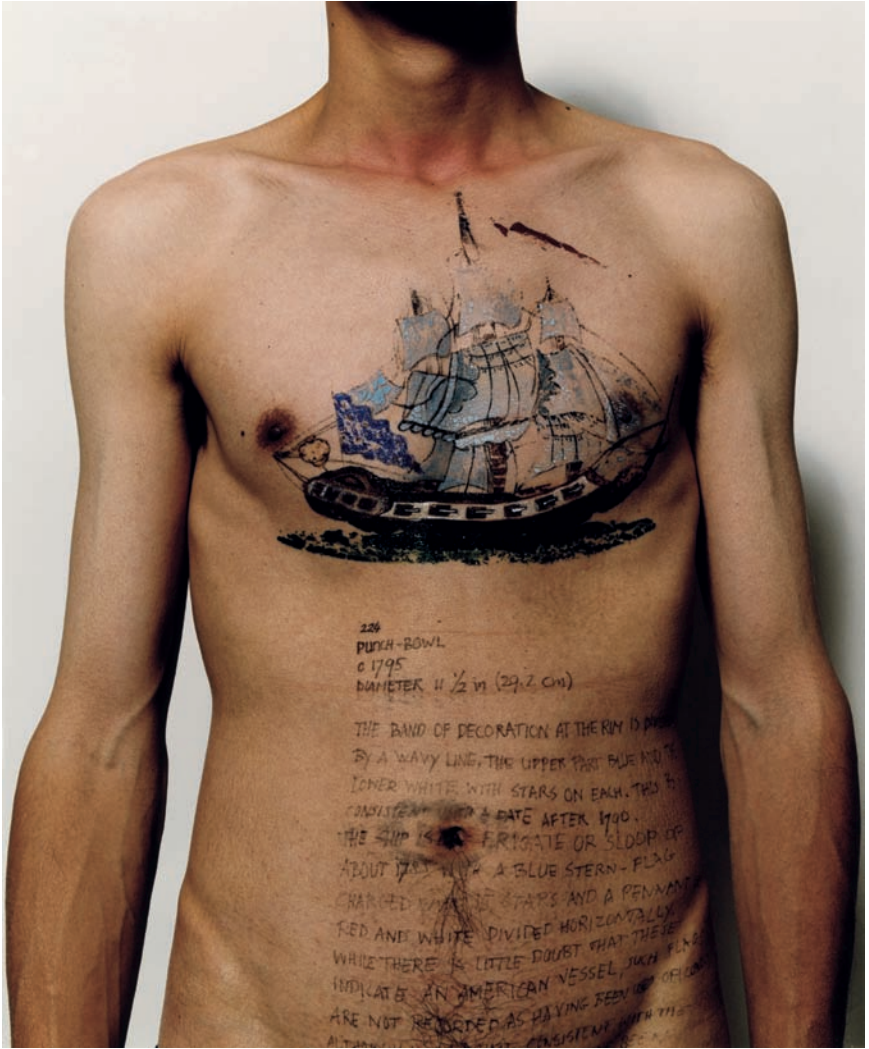
Plate 11 Ni Haifeng, *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade* (2000)

Plate 12 Anne Graham, *Passage* (2000)

Plate 13 Shirin Neshat, Video Still, *Passage* (2001)

Plate 14 Johanna Hällsten, *Sounds Like It* (2007)
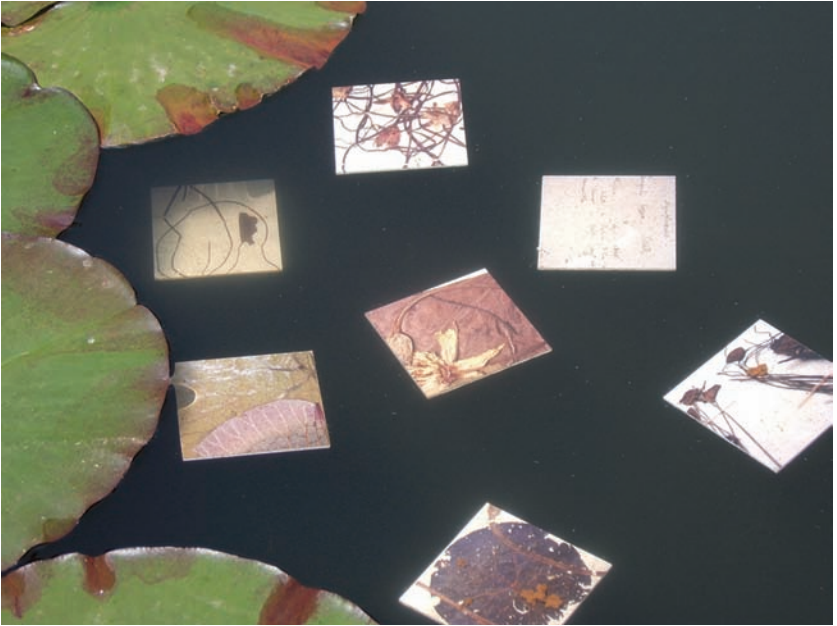
Plate 15 Johanna Hällsten, *Sounds Like It* (2007)
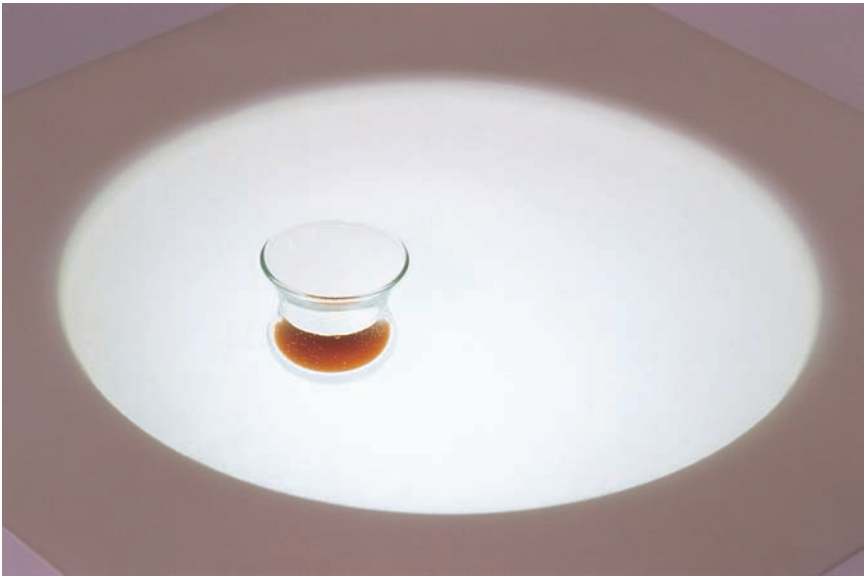
Plate 16 Hossein Valamanesh, *Chai, as close as I could get* (1998)

Chapter 3

Passage – transitive affects

Passage – that by which one travels; a journey, a corridor

Passage – a movement in thought from one idea to another; an act, an incident, an event

Passage – possibility, opportunity or right to pass; transit, movement, liberty, leave

Passage: corporeal economy

In 1998, British artist Christine Borland installed *English Family China* at Liverpool's Tate Gallery as part of *Artranspennine 98*.[1] The work consisted of five 'family conversation pieces', decorated 'bone china'[2] skulls arranged in various small, familial groups (adult male, female and children's skulls, placed in close proximity). In the same year, Borland produced five *Set Conversation Pieces*, bone china casts of infant skulls in birthing positions within female pelvic bones. Both series of 'conversations' were decorated with patterns made popular in the 18th century by Liverpool's own porcelain industry, including the 'jumping boy', a trailing *Convululus*, an intricate Liver bird motif and a range of ship patterns designed to commemorate maiden voyages from the port.[3]

In the year 2000, Ni Haifeng produced a photographic series entitled *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade*. The series consists of images of Haifeng's own body painted with designs from sources on the 18th century Dutch trade in 'china'. As a Chinese-born artist living and working in the Netherlands, Haifeng's location of his body as a vessel inscribed by the histories of European imperialism is precise. Taken together, Borland's *English Family China* and Haifeng's *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade* are an eloquent dialogue between two economies – the capitalist economy that sustained European imperialism and the corporeal economy that underpinned its success. The ships commemorated by plates manufactured in Liverpool carried

Figure 3.1 Christine Borland, *English Family China* (1998)

European immigrants as passengers and African slaves as cargo, the latter stored in the hold alongside internationally-sourced commodities such as sugar, tea and the 'china' from which these would be consumed.

As representations of colonised bodies, the works demonstrate the intrinsic connections between trade, transport and the traffic in human beings that characterised the highpoint of European imperialism. I would like to suggest, however, that the notion of a corporeal economy might move further, beyond the representation of the body, toward the articulation of embodied subjectivity in and through a network of circulation and exchange. The multifaceted economies of European imperialism did not simply collect, categorise and command 'bodies'; imperialism's power rested in its ability to create its subjects, determine and demand their bodily incorporation within its structures of control. A corporeal economy is active in its production of embodied subjects and thus in situating identity; the works by Borland and Haifeng do not just depict bodies as objects, they make manifest the practices through which bodies become meaningful, and they suggest to whom and how. Shifting the emphasis in this way enables us to engage with *English Family China* and *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade* as more than the illustration of a history already known, framed and finished. The works become an active part of a dialogue between the historical past and the living present, a figurative passage between the images, objects and ideas that circulate viscerally as the legacy of European colonial power.

Figure 3.2 Ni Haifeng, *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade* (2000)

A useful starting point to develop these ideas further is the notion of conversation, so aptly mobilised by Borland in *English Family China*. The familial groups of decorated china skulls refer explicitly to the 'conversation piece', a genre of painting that became very popular among bourgeois art patrons during the 18th century, especially in England. The genre was typified by its own reference to an earlier and more 'elite' genre of religious painting, the *sacra conversazione*, intimate group images of the Holy Family with angels,

saints and/or donors. As the iconography of the *conversazione* adapted to suit the need for portraits among a new, upwardly-mobile class of art collectors, the conversation piece was born: group portraits in domestic interiors in which patrons demonstrated their wealth (images of valuable furnishings and objects, not least porcelain, abound), their 'cultural capital' (including, of course, the very act of commissioning the work) and, often inadvertently, their complicity in the most devastating fact of empire – slavery and forced migration (the images often refer to the presence of African servants and slaves in the household).

This multiple reference to 'conversation' as an art historical term already suggests a passage between times and places, through images, ideas and objects. But conversation has a further resonance with the notion of a corporeal economy, one referenced in the other series produced by Borland in the same year, the *Set Conversation Pieces* – decorated bone china casts of foetal birthing positions. The etymology of 'conversation' is significant here; although we have all but lost this usage in contemporary English, *conversation* once referred to sexual intercourse and *conversing* thus engaged the corporeal economy of reproduction as well as the symbolic economy of language and image. Importantly, *English Family China* and the *Set Conversation Pieces* do not simply conflate these meanings, but begin to open a space in which they might find new connective valences. The family conversation pieces, for example, speak to the movement of bodies underpinning colonial trade as well as to the domestication of Christian iconography so useful in the support of an expanding empire. Likewise, the foetal skulls passing precariously through the birth canal refer to the bodily connection between mother and child, but their surfaces, decorated with legible, historically-specific patterns, remind us that culturally-inscribed difference is always already signified in, on and through the body.

Taken together, the conversation pieces speak to the complete imbrication of bodies within the geo-political economies and circulation patterns of empire. Imperialism connected raw materials with finished products (such as porcelain); rare specimen plants with unwanted weeds (such as *Convolvulus*); economic migrants, middle-class merchants and colonial civil servants with slaves. All of these bodies were carried along the passages carved out by an expanding empire and all were linked, irrevocably, by its multi-directional forms of circulation and exchange. More strongly, I want to suggest that *English Family China* and the *Set Conversation Pieces* themselves open a passage, a channel of conversation, between the material legacy of the past and the aesthetic encounter with the work in the present. This implicates us as viewers, making us participants within the networks of circulation being explored in the work, rather than its disembodied (and disempowered) spectators.

The ceramic objects encountered in *English Family China* are instantly recognisable, yet not in fact familiar; their sizes and shapes, colours, textures, weight and mass are *as if known already* because the porcelain export

trade was truly global in its expanse and extraordinarily pervasive in its impact. Its material legacy is thus experienced as a powerful bodily economy of meaning: most viewers would know what it is to hold a porcelain cup, to drink from it, to examine its surface and its pattern. As we encounter *English Family China*, we embark on a passage that connects the intimacy of that personal bodily knowledge with knowledge of the history of colonial trade and its corporeal economies of migration and slavery [colour plate 10]. We are generated as subjects by this exchange between our bodies and the bodies of others; we are located within the iniquitous circulation routes that connect the traces of the imperial past with the global present.

Haifeng's series takes this conversation with circulation a stage further, using the proximate boundary of skin as the decorative surface of exchange. This proximity is enhanced through the specific use of photography in the series; the images focus our vision in a decidedly haptic relationship with the inscribed body, picking out, rather than obscuring, tiny imperfections in both the surface of the skin and the painted designs that cling to the flesh. These minutiae – tiny hairs, pores, flaking or bleeding paint – enhance the permeable exchange between the body and its enculturation through inscription. There is not a sealed, natural body – *tabula rasa* – preceding its entrance into culture, nor is there a transparent, formative text able to contain flesh in the interpellation of subjectivity. Rather, Haifeng's series instantiates what Elizabeth Grosz argued so compellingly: '[t]he body is not opposed to culture, a resistant throwback to a natural past; it is itself a cultural, *the* cultural, product'.[4] Moreover, I would suggest that *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade* locates the body (as *the* cultural product) at the nexus of multiple levels of circulation, of geo-political and corporeal economies, themselves configured through passages across ideas, images, subjects and objects.

Take, for instance, the sources of Haifeng's bodily inscriptions, the literature on the Dutch East India Company and the porcelain trade between China and the Netherlands. These sources provide ample evidence of the circularity of imperial trade links; porcelain produced in China created a market in the Netherlands and, eventually, one of the most famous European porcelain manufacturing bases in Delft. The Dutch export trade included both Delftware that was transported worldwide, and Dutch designs taken to Jingdezhen to be produced as 'authentic China' and sold in Europe; the latter came to be known as 'Chine de Commande'. Haifeng explicitly invoked these multiple exchanges in the work[5] – in one image within the series, for example, the 'pattern' on the artist's torso is a page from a catalogue showing a commemorative plate for a trading vessel and reproducing the text discussing the East India Company's history [colour plate 11]. The archival conversation that *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade* opens is, in an important sense, without a single origin point. The patterns gain their efficacy in and through circulation; the more they are traded, developed, re-traded, re-developed, the more powerful they become as tropes.

The rendering of the inscriptions themselves refers to another circular conversation, this time signifying a radical investment in the notion of surface. For instance, two of the works in the series centre on complex and detailed patterning covering areas of the artist's body – his hands in one work and his thighs and buttocks in another. The surface areas deform the patterns, their contours realigning the floral and geometric repetition crucial to any 'seamless' reading of the imagery. Detail is redoubled here as well, as the fragment/detail of the body corresponds with the near-excess detail of the inscriptions. These works within the series open onto graphemic passages between body and image, writing and drawing, but never resolve wholly into legibility precisely because they acknowledge the surface, the corporeal underpinning of textual knowledge systems, so frequently effaced to achieve meaning.[6] In their refusal of straightforward legibility, the works are also in conversation with what has come to be known as the 'false calligraphy' tradition, a strand of *avant-garde* Chinese painting from the late 1980s and early 1990s that mimicked the pictographic forms of written Chinese without actually signifying anything. This was a mode of work that countered culturally-privileged claims of authenticity and, moreover, became a mainstay of the international contemporary art circuit in the period.

Connecting to the false calligraphy tradition, Haifeng reinforces surface *sans* signification as a form of transnational circulation, a mock code that displaces models of meaning and subjectivity premised upon authenticity and depth. Haifeng's insistence on circulation in this self-portrait thus articulates a self formed in and of multiple exchanges between decorative patterns, texts, body surfaces, temporal frames, geographies, art practices and languages. This is a self configured through networks *across* – translation, transcription, transliteration and transculturation. At the nexus of these economies we find an 'intersectional' identity premised upon movement and the surfaces of exchange rather than fixity and originary depth.

Again, there are important implications here in rethinking the conventions of representation. To engage *English Family China* and *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade* through representation begs the question of what they represent, thus assuming that there is a prior origin point (*that* which is present and thus, *re*-presented by the works) and that this origin may be located, or even perhaps fully known. What I have been arguing, however, is that these works are conversant with processes of circulation and exchange, that they are able to negotiate the movement (across times and spaces) of ideas, objects and images, without negating the material effects of histories and the corporeality of subjectivity. In this sense, they are neither representations of subjects nor decorative objects, but passages in and through which mutable, intersectional identity can be materialised.

These preliminary thoughts on the multiple economies of empire and their legacy in contemporary art's engagement with transnational circulation and cross-cultural exchange invoke the central motif of this chapter – passage.

As I am developing it here, passage does not imply a sense of unidirectional movement from an origin point to an end, but operates as an open-ended figure for circulation and transit. More strongly, I am arguing that passages provide ways of thinking through subjectivity as formed within the connective economies that engender social relations and responsibility on a global scale – geo-political and corporeal, here, but also transitive, domestic and affective economies. In and through these economies, the full political force of the passages configured by contemporary art can be articulated.

Passage: transitive economy

In February 2000, Anne Graham's work for the Sydney Sculpture Walk, *Passage*, was installed in Martin Square, at the heart of the civic area of the city. *Passage* consists of three interconnected elements: an outline or 'map' of one of the former Georgian houses on the site[7] inscribed into the rough paving of the square in polished black granite and underlit metal grilles; three fountains, whose shapes are taken from Georgian sponging pans, sited at the 'ablutions' end of the former home; and, at approximately ten-minute intervals, a fine mist that rises from the grilles to form ghostly walls where the house used to stand.

The title, *Passage*, can be read literally, with reference to corridors, hallways, journeys and the movement, or passage, of time. But *Passage* also performs meaning by materialising the site as, simultaneously, a definitive,

Figure 3.3 Anne Graham, *Passage* (2000)

physical locus and an imaginative activity, a modulation between object and process, where the past is mapped within the present. *Passage* mobilises an 'in-between' in space–time relations, neither spatialising time nor historicising space, but exploring their dynamic intersection. Arguably, Graham's work articulates what Doreen Massey has called the 'event of place', where the 'here and now' meet to produce subjects, places and histories:

> 'Here' is where spatial narratives meet up or form configurations, conjunctures or trajectories, which have their own temporalities (so 'now' is as problematical as 'here') … 'Here' is an intertwining of histories in which the spatiality of those histories (their then as well as their here) is inescapably entangled.[8]

As an event of place, *Passage* opens the site temporally as well as spatially, suggesting a modulation between the artwork as an object and its *work* as a process of engagement between subjects and spaces. The granite, grilles and bronze basins accord with the conservative impulses of much public art, providing a visual centre to the square and the pleasant sound of water rushing through controlled jets [colour plate 12]. But the mist that rises to form the walls of the 'house' disrupts the space, intervenes in the daily life of the city, and creates a new architecture from its past. This is public sculpture as theatre, as an event, a passage between the 'now and then' used to invoke the 'here and there' of a space marked by a contested history of exile and brutal settlement, fought over the image of the site as an 'empty map' – the colonial myth of Australia as *terra nullius*.[9]

In the same year that Graham installed *Passage* in Sydney, Shirin Neshat collaborated with Philip Glass on a film project whose images were initiated in response to another contested site – Israel/Palestine. The work is entitled *Passage*, and again, there are literal correspondences: the protagonists in the film enact a funereal ritual, a rite of passage from life to death and from death to renewal. The figures' passage across time and space within the short film is circular and connective; a body borne by a group of male figures is met by mourning women on a beach, while a lone child, digging in the sand at a distance from the adults, replicates the actions of burial, arranging stones over a mound. In the final sequence of the film, its visual direction is reversed, beginning at the locus of the child, from whence fire sweeps across the sand toward the collected women and men, as if in an ancient, unbidden act of purification [colour plate 13].

The production of the work was also a form of passage, a movement between ideas, images and sound developed in dialogue. Glass initiated the collaboration, approaching Neshat with a short (*c*. 11 min) score. At this time, Neshat had been working on visual motifs derived loosely from footage of the Israel/Palestine conflict, specifically news coverage of mourners (both Israeli and Palestinian) carrying their dead aloft. These fragmentary visual and

Figure 3.4 Shirin Neshat, Video Still, *Passage* (2001)

sonic passages were brought together in the final work through a collaborative process that itself required a transmedial and transcultural exchange, leaving neither the initial score nor the images (nor, arguably, the artists themselves) unchanged.

Like the *Passage* produced by Graham, that by Neshat and Glass brings the 'here and now' into vital connection with the 'there and then', linking the space of the film with the 'event of place', where place is not a fixed and stable marker of identity or power, but is a site of perpetual negotiation. Following Massey's argument:

> Place, in other words, does – as many argue – change us, not through some visceral belonging (some barely changing rootedness, as so many would have it), but through the *practising* of place, the negotiation of intersecting trajectories; place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us.[10]

As arena where negotiations are forced upon us, where places are practised, these two *Passage*s are certainly events. Yet connecting the works through a notion of the event begs the question as to what purpose, to what effect?

Arguably, to great effect and with a crucial, critical purpose: namely, to open what I want to call a transitive economy in and through the *work* of art. This formulation does not propose art solely as an object (the artwork), but also as an action, a process of engagement – art's *work*.[11]

My interest in thinking through transitivity in relation to the event is not wholly without precedent; in a telling sequence from her book, *Sounding the Event*, Yve Lomax suggested a link between transitivity and the constitution of the event as a passage in these terms:

> Fundamental to the event is the relation of extension; for any event, there is a coming together of events and this process of coming together, which is transitive, is what constitutes the event – the chunk – as a passage.[12]

Like Massey's formulations of the event of place where 'intersecting trajectories' meet, Lomax focuses upon events as extensive – as acts that bring together multiple, even divergent, elements. Significantly, Lomax's argument moves *from* the event *toward* the passage via this concept of extension, suggesting that the passage (the 'chunk') is the locus of composition for the event. In this sense, a passage is the very possibility of encountering an event, or, as I would want to suggest, taking Lomax's argument in another direction, the materialisation of a transitive economy. To explore this further, it is worth defining the term 'transitive' as it is being used here, since it opens two critical insights – how extensive connections across difference might be configured, and how works of art can produce participants rather than disengaged spectators.

Derived from the same root as 'transit', passing across or through, 'transitive' has two primary uses: the first is in logic and mathematics, from where the senses of extension and relation are drawn (if $A = B$ and $B = C$, then $A = C$); and the second is linguistic, describing a verb that requires an object to complete its action. In the former, it is important to note that a transitive relationship need not be reduced to equivalence or sameness, even in logic/maths, since the relation between the terms need not be described by 'is equal to' (as above), but rather, by more open-ended and non-linear formulations, such as 'shares particular qualities with'. In this more open sense, transitivity is a way of exploring the mechanisms by which we draw disparate items together through analogy, bricolage and/or segue. The arts are a potent form of this kind of relational transitivity, using a wide range of visual, material, poetic and aesthetic operations to make new meanings through multi-valent connections. On these terms, the transitive economies that characterise art's *work* move beyond the binary, combining any number of extensive ideas, objects or events, yet always reminding us that while many connective valences are possible, not all of them work. That is, there are relational resonances between some materials and concepts that enable correspondence to emerge, and there are dissonances between others that shatter its hold.

Similarly, the second, linguistic use of transitivity suggests a continuum of relationships, rather than a binary opposition; few verbs are absolutely transitive or intransitive, most are mutable, deriving their transitive status in use, through making meaning. Transitivity further implies a change of state or transformation in and through connection such that neither the subject nor the object of the action remain unchanged in the encounter. Take 'making art': 'I make art' is not unidirectional, with the subject simply acting upon the object. Rather, 'I' am transformed in the very production of 'art'. This again posits a model of subjectivity formed in extensivity, with and through other subjects and objects in the world, rather than through solipsism. The subject and the object participate in the act of 'art', in the event of making, and are both transformed. Transitivity here is a form of intrinsic participation, going beyond spectatorial distance. As I am arguing in this chapter, a transitive economy is non-binary, multiply connective and extensive in its relational processes and, importantly, participative in a very broad sense. That is, subjects of linguisitic/aesthetic transitives require objects to complete their thought or action.

If, as I am arguing, we move toward the idea that the *work* of art is to materialise a transitive economy, to open a transformative and extensive relationship between images, objects and ideas, then, taking this logic forward, art does not simply represent or communicate this to a mute spectator, but engages participants in the event that it unfolds. The participants complete the thought, undertake a passage, as they become part of a transitive economy.

It is useful here to return to the Neshat/Glass collaborative *Passage* to develop this notion of a transitive economy. The internal structure of the work pairs two passages – one musical, one visual – to produce an evocative account of ritual. Rituals span the present and the past by bridging the gulf between the particular, immanent conditions of daily existence and an unknowable, but often desired, transcendence. In *Passage*, the music figures this in its harmonics and circularity, broken only by the voices of the mourning female figures whose cries pull us back to the immediacy of grief and longing. The ritual enacted within the work is similarly 'now' (the actors' clothing placing them within a contemporary frame of reference) and 'always' (it is a repetition, an eternal return). Moreover, the work is a cinematic installation; the space of performance *within* the work can only be engaged through the performance space created by the event *of* the work.[13] The complex movements between times and spaces typical of ritual activity – now, then, here, there, always, everywhere – are effected through the transitive economy of *Passage*, through its extensive and relational valences, but also through the form of participative agency that it engenders. Participant–spectators play a role within the structures of ritual invoked by the work – *we* complete its thought.

The transitive negotiation of space and time in *Passage* reverses the usual logic of the relationship between place and identity, both on and off the screen. Rather than assuming that the fixity of place produces collective forms of

identity, we might look again at transient spaces where identities are nego-
tiated in performance. Or, as Nadia Lovell argued:

> Rather than view the local as firmly situated through myth or ritual, the
> performative aspects of religious activities are considered essential in
> anchoring belonging and making it (temporarily) tangible through social
> practice'.[14]

Nowhere could the question of the status of local space and belonging be more
critical and contested than in the territories of Israel/Palestine. At its most
extreme, the conflict between the two sides takes a small parcel of land to be a
definitive marker of identity, whose status is non-negotiable. If, instead,
this land is understood to be a 'temporarily tangible' site of belonging,
one materialised through performative rituals of identity in and through space,
it becomes, in a very profound sense, negotiable. I would suggest that the
transitive economy opened by the Neshat/Glass film *Passage* enacts precisely
this shift from fixed site to negotiable situation, making all of us – Israelis,
Palestinians and any other participant–viewers – potential agents of change.

Graham's sculptural installation also links site with situation, bringing the
history of Sydney into direct contact with the experiences of residents and
visitors in the city's present spaces. To undertake the 'passage' figured by
Graham's installation, spectators must become participants, engaging bodily
with the physical presence of the work, and imaginatively with the absences it
invokes. The outline inscribed in the paving, the cartographic contours of the
work, can be understood only in the movement of viewers, tracing the lines
with their footsteps, moving 'into' and 'out from' the 'house', imagining
its scale and its relation to what once constituted, and what now constitutes,
this urban centre. As the 'walls' of the 'house' appear and recede in vapour, a
transitive economy is materialised in the body of the viewer, just as surely as it
is in Martin Square.

In its multi-sensory modulation between the past and the present, the virtual
and the real, *Passage* suggests a way of doing histories otherwise, of making
histories 'matter' in every sense of the word. In this way, the transitive econ-
omy of *Passage* enables participants to inhabit the space of the city, and the
locus of the present, differently. As the event of the work unfolds in Martin
Square, the potential to 'actualise' a new or different figurative form of social
inhabitation emerges, if only for a short time. Providing this opportunity,
Passage destabilises the city as a naturalised site, rendering it a situation, an
orientation, a connective economy, within the world.

Passage: domestic economy

It is an obvious point that the sculptural installations by Graham and
Borland, *Passage* and *English Family China*, reference a familiar, domestic

economy – the former materialises a terraced house, while the latter composes 'family' groups from the very stuff of daily household experience – ceramic tableware. But, if these works do not stray far from home in their motifs, materials or meanings, they demonstrate that 'home' has long been as far away as it is near.

Take, for instance, the homes of the 18th-century English middle classes, the patrons of the conversation piece portraits and 'Spode china' dinnerware invoked by Borland's installation. These homes were the nexus of a domestic economy that was intimately connected to a large part of the world through the trade routes of the British Empire. It is not necessary to rehearse the well-known histories here; suffice it to say that it is a powerful cultural fiction that English homes are castles, fortresses closed to the rest of the world. Rather, they have operated for centuries more as trading posts, open to a complex world economy based on the control of materials, manufacture and markets on a truly global scale.[15]

English Family China refers to this global home, to the intimate inter-connection between the domestic economy and its imperial underpinning and, moreover, links this to a specific locality – Liverpool. The cobalt blue motifs were derived from ceramics made in Liverpool at the very same time that ships departing the city's ports carried English families to the far corners of the British Empire. And Liverpool's international connections are not merely a dusty, archival history; *English Family China* was installed at the Tate Gallery in Liverpool, part of the public legacy of the Tate & Lyle sugar fortune, in the *Artranspennine 98* show, a critical marker in the UK's use of the arts in urban regeneration and regional development programmes. Not surprisingly, Liverpool has subsequently been a 'European Capital of Culture' and still plays host to the UK's most prominent contemporary art biennial. Liverpool, then, is paradigmatic. It is a vernacular city with a specific domestic role, yet simultaneously a city steeped in the legacy of imperialism and the regional development priorities produced as a counter to the deregulatory impulses of globalisation.

Graham's public commission, *Passage*, similarly plays on the present and the past of a city, linking the public, civic histories of Sydney with their more humble domestic origins. The architectural motif is specific – the work 're-places' one of the Georgian terraced houses that had occupied the site while Sydney was a British colonial outpost. This point in the history of the city is, literally, pivotal, standing between pre-colonial, Aboriginal ownership of the continent and the present place of Sydney as part of a global metropolitan network. It is impossible to understand the transformation of the former into the latter without the material fact of colonisation and the daily, domestic economy that ultimately secured European settlement of the country. And, without this transformation, the work itself would not exist, commissioned as it was to mark Sydney's place in the global metropolitan arena, playing host to the Olympic Games of 2000.

Passage and *English Family China* thus deploy domestic materials and vernacular motifs in ways that situate spaces as at once both local and global. More strongly, the works reconfigure simplistic binary oppositions between the global and the local by demonstrating the intimate inter-relationship between the public and the private, the foreign and the domestic. I would suggest that it is not a coincidence that these works engender 'extroverted'[16] senses of place through the domestic, a conventionally 'feminised' economy, and connect the local with the global through patterns of circulation, surface and exchange focusing on notions of 'home'. Rather, such connections are intrinsic to the very definition of an 'economy', a structure that links the visceral micro-politics of home and body to the macro-political activities characteristic of the nation-state and, latterly, global networks of exchange.

Indeed, my use of the phrase 'domestic economy' in this passage is a strategic ploy, an etymological over-determination, given that 'economy' (*oikes*) was first used as a term for 'home management'. The development of the term then extended it to include bodily organisation – the operations of the body as economies – and finally to encompass the now more common, more 'public' descriptions of the organisation of financial exchanges and trade at the level of the nation-state, or, after the impact of globalisation, transnationally.

If the very processes we define as economies begin at home, operate with and through the body, and then extend from this nexus to the level of the nation and beyond, we find ourselves with a compelling link between many of the terms that are already circulating here as interconnected *economies*: corporeal, domestic, national, international, imperial, global. I would argue that this has important conceptual consequences, reinforcing the imbrication of the public and the private, the civic and the domestic, while bridging the ostensible gap between macro- and micropolitics. In this latter effect, thinking through the multiple connective economies generated by works such as *Passage* and *English Family China* demonstrates how the meta-processes and histories of, for instance, imperialism and globalisation, are brought to bear at the level of the embodied, situated subject. As the editors of the volume *Uprootings/ Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration* suggest:

> Processes of homing and migration take shape through the imbrication of affective and bodily experience in broader social processes and institutions where unequal differences of race, class, gender and sexuality, among many other relevant categories, are generated.[17]

It is not coincidental that affective experience is referenced here as a link between the micro-politics of home and body and the macro-politics of migration, passage and settlement in a world marked by iniquitous arrangements of power and access. Remaining with/in the figure of the passage, it is useful here to extend the affective link further as a critical form of circulation between the macro- and the micro-economies of political exchange.

Passage: affective economy

In her recent book, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed examines the idea of an affective economy in terms of highly-charged forms of language. As she argues:

> Signs increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more signs circulate, the more affective they become … Given this, affective economies are social and material as well as psychic.[18]

We have already seen the significance of circulation and surface to the corporeal economies engendered through Borland's *English Family China* and Haifeng's *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade*. It is sufficient to add here that these works demonstrate an affective economy, as described by Ahmed, in action; the 'china' patterns appropriated in both works become more affective from the process of circulation itself, rather than through any authorial intention or unique aura. Their power as signs increases precisely because they are in common circulation, being traded, collected, re-traded and 're-collected' repeatedly – *because of*, rather than *despite*, their reproducibility and multiply-connective valences. In producing these works, therefore, Borland and Haifeng do not mimic the modernist ideal of the artist as the singular author of a unique sign. Instead, the artists operate *within* the economies they interrogate and make use of languages – material, visual, symbolic – that precede their 'individual' articulation in the works of art. This recasts agency in a critical way: the 'individual/subject' is always already social, and agency is generated more by inter-subjective acts (engagements between people) than by sole authorship or singular intention (the expression of my 'self'). In an affective economy, then, circulation gains agency, an agency premised upon material and social exchange.

If we turn back to the Neshat/Glass collaboration, *Passage*, in relation to the notion of an affective economy, we can understand better the implications of this shift from authorial intent and reified art object toward affective agency. Neshat's visual passages were, strictly speaking, unique; she worked with a group of actors on a beach in Morocco and filmed the 'ritual' they performed. However, the languages of gesture and movement deployed in *Passage*, in addition to the wider schema of the staged ritual, were derived in part from televised documentary footage, the kind of footage that circulates swiftly and repeatedly throughout the world such that it becomes part of the cultural imaginary on a global scale. This is not, however, to suggest that it operates in the same way for all viewers, nor to imagine that it necessarily creates a bond between those who watch it. It is merely to suggest that these passages – in this case, of mourners carrying their dead in procession to the sound of their collective grief – gain a great deal of affective power in their mass circulation, a power that can be renegotiated in artworks as they effect passages between different ideas, images, objects, spaces and subjects.

Although these affective exchanges have an impact upon subjects at a psychological and physiological level, they are not purely 'personal'. Hence Neshat's 'unique' imagery is able to connect with the cultural imaginary of many different participant–spectators, who experience their affective power *without* necessarily being positioned as unified or homogeneous subjects. We need not be the *same* to be engaged by such arresting images; their power resides in the way that they can provide a differentiated yet connective space, open to collective encounter with others in the world.

Similarly, such affective economies have material ramifications, even as they negotiate 'psychic' or 'imaginary' territories. That is, I am not arguing that art's work can be collapsed simply into provoking a set of 'feelings', nor that we should abandon criticality, rigour and debate in the face of the highly-charged emotions that can be experienced in the encounter with artworks. Rather, I am asking precisely how we might account for the affective power of art in terms of its ability to generate knowledge, compel critical thought and motivate social change. In this, I am thinking through affect in parallel with scholars such as Ahmed, Jill Bennett and Teresa Brennan, who have likewise stressed affect's intrinsic sociality to argue that it is the very ground of political agency.[19] We act when we are moved to do so and, while art cannot determine action, it can compel it in the most extraordinary ways.

The relationship between politics and art has long been vexed, and I do not intend to examine its history here. While I am arguing that the affective economies of contemporary art have important political ramifications, I am not arguing that art is a form of political representation, that politics can be 'illustrated' by art, or even that all art is political, in keeping with the thinking that forces us to affirm that all human activity is political, when politics are defined so broadly as to become an impotent tautology. Rather, I am suggesting that art has the potential to engage subjects, in and through their embodiment, in ways that permit dialogues to open with embodied others in the world without effacing differences. In this way, the passages configured by art's work can become the locus of inter-subjective political agency.

Moreover, political agency is critical to the notion of passage as a figure for the multiple economies that link the body and home with the nation and the world, through possibilities and prohibitions. Passages invoke journeys, our opportunity or right to pass; in short, movement, liberty and leave. In this sense, thinking through the figure of passage begs a specific political question that has long underpinned the notion of a 'right to pass', namely the question of citizenship.

It is at this point that we encounter a significant and unresolved tension in contemporary politics: if the nation-state is still the primary guarantor of citizenship rights and status in large parts of the world, the transnational forces of globalisation are now loosening their hold. And, however unequally the rights accorded to citizens have been distributed through national-level political imperatives, many of the alternatives to citizenship thus defined

are reactionary excuses for ethnocentrism at best, and genocide at worst. Thus the transitional moment in which we find ourselves is not replete with self-contained systems that could easily replace the nation-state to provide a new and functional locus for citizenship,[20] nor do we have to hand useful models for global or 'world citizens' (literally, *cosmopolitans*) defined through fluid boundaries.

There is little agreement between scholars on the debates concerning citizenship and globalisation, other than that we need to find new models, alternative figurations, for the changed circumstances in which we find ourselves, if we are to move toward a world where differences do not impel destruction. I want to suggest that the figure of passage can participate in the project to reconceive world citizenship beyond either a multi-cultural fantasy of 'cosmopolitans', whose open-mindedness simply transcends material differences between themselves and others, or the bleak prognosis of the world as an inevitably iniquitous sphere, populated by monadic individuals designed to consume or destroy others. The trope of passage suggests a critical exploration of world citizenship that is both material and yet mutable, operating at the level of the subject (figuring an intersectional subject of circulation) and at the level of practice (figuring global belonging).

Conventional definitions of citizenship, commonly aligned with geo-political boundaries such as nation-states, federal unions and empires, tend to interpellate subjects through exclusivity and assimilation. That is, the conventions of citizenship are homogenising and normative, either excluding difference as beyond the frame (non-citizens, foreigners, strangers) or silencing it through assimilative practices and processes (e.g. being obliged to assume cultural norms recognised by the state). Arguably, this structural logic produces a subject-as-citizen whose normativity is reinforced through the conceit of universality; specific privileges granted the 'citizen' are taken as universal rights while, simultaneously, being denied to non-normative subjects.

If the geo-political framework that supported normative models of subjects-as-citizens is beginning to wither, the philosophical conventions that underpinned the concept of the subject as a singular, unified and self-same individual have already disintegrated. In the work of feminist, post-structural and post-colonial theorists, subjectivity has been reconceived in significant ways to admit of embodiment, situation, difference and intersectionality. This work runs counter to conventional definitions of citizenship and suggests new models, premised upon process and multiplicity. These insights are increasingly shifting the ground of political theory in its address to questions of agency and subjectivity in a globalised world.

For example, in an important parallel to the questions being raised here concerning the passages figured by contemporary art, philosopher Benjamin Lee argued that there is, in the present geo-political climate, a pressing need to find a way to conceive 'subjects of circulation'.[21] Although he does not use the term 'affective economy', preferring the phrase 'cultural performativity of

circulation', the parallel is clear: contemporary global networks and new social imaginaries are mutually constitutive phenomena, produced in and through 'circulation itself', not in or through the objects that circulate, and this has major ramifications for the interpellation of subjects. While Lee's essay calls for this new subject of circulation, he does not provide a model, suggesting only that '[t]he key insight is linking imagination with circulation and circulation with semiotic form'.[22] I am arguing that thinking through the figure of passage as the embodiment of a transitive, affective economy does precisely this. In so doing, it also offers us the potential to rethink citizenship and its relationship to subjectivity beyond stasis.

This, then, adds an important new dimension to the question of circulation posed earlier in relation to Haifeng's *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export Trade*. If that series can be seen to articulate a subject, it is clearly a subject of circulation. The series provides no ground for the constitution of subjectivity as homogeneous, singular, fixed or normative; rather, the series engages with the very conditions of intersectional identity engendered in and through circulation. That point is crucial here – I am not suggesting that the series is a 'representation' of intersectional identity or, by extension, of a new model of citizenship, but that the mechanisms by which the work comes into signification are themselves passages, instances of circulation, conversation, transitive and affective economies. The work responds to the need, as Lee put it, to link imagination with circulation and circulation with semiotic form. Making that connection provides the possibility to articulate a subject who is both embodied/material and in process. Haifeng's male body, for example, works as a nuanced variation within the affective economy of surface pattern, domestic craft and the decorated bodies of colonised 'others', all of which are understood ordinarily as feminised signs. The 'self' of this self-portrait is permeable and decorative, yet masculine; the intersection between this body and the histories of international trade that mark it is simultaneously specific and extensive, open to inter-subjective connections with and through difference.

Arguably, it is at the level of inter-subjectivity that the practices of world citizenship may best be reconceived in and through the figure of passage. In using the term 'practices' here, I am indebted to the work of Ruth Lister, whose feminist interrogation of citizenship sought to deconstruct the binary thinking that so frequently excluded women (and other non-normative subjects) from the rights and privileges of full citizenship. It is not surprising that a feminist re-evaluation of citizenship would be particularly cognisant of the flaws of binary logic and critical of under-examined dichotomies, such as public/private or justice/care, that have translated too readily into a difference in status between civic citizenship and personal or familial community. As Lister argues, citizenship can be conceived as both a 'status, carrying a wide range of rights, and as a practice, involving political participation, broadly defined'.[23] Like the figure of the passage, it is an object and a process at once.

In thinking through the potential of contemporary art to engage with the question of world citizenship, the notions of practice and political participation are intriguing. What sort of practice is citizenship and how might art participate in it? I would argue that transitivity and affect, as they have been developed in earlier sections of this chapter, have a critical role to play in making connections between practice, as it is understood politically, and the practices of contemporary transnational art. One pivotal connection is 'participation', or as the editors of The Situated Politics of Belonging put it, the 'participatory dimension of belonging',[24] a critical site for the constitution of the citizen-subject through practices that can be co-extensive with contemporary art. While participation is a term frequently invoked by political theorists and art critics alike, it is not an easy term to use well. For participation to have any meaning in either the political or the aesthetic sense, it must move beyond passivity, merely 'going through the motions'; participation must be engaged and active. In other words, the subject must become part of the process, must actualise the event or, as in the earlier discussion of transitivity, complete the thought and, in so doing, be itself transformed.

In this sense, participation is not just concerned with art's representational potential, the idea that one can be moulded by, or given 'cultural capital' through, exposure to reflections of socio-political realities or (even) aspirations. While continual exposure to representations does have an impact upon the affective power of particular images, objects and signs, in itself it does not necessarily produce forms of aesthetic or political participation adequate to configuring citizenship beyond the exclusive logic of the nation-state. Participation, taken in the stronger sense, concerns an inter-subjective negotiation of place, power and knowledge that can instantiate a new way of inhabiting the world.

For instance, English Family China informs a particular understanding of place through an extensive domestic economy. The work refuses to let the body/home be disconnected from the 'other', the global networks of trade, empire and difference that interpellate them. In English Family China, the domestic economy is decidedly cosmopolitan; it is, potentially, the very locus of world citizenship. Moreover, it operates as more than just a historical reference point, bringing contemporary viewers into its multiple economies through pleasurable, corporeal engagement. I would suggest that this work connects with what Mica Nava has called 'visceral cosmopolitanism', world citizenship experienced in and through the body/home, as attraction, identification with others and 'inclusive experiences of belonging'.[25] If participatory belonging is one of the key practices of citizenship, then the notion of a visceral cosmopolitanism reminds us how deeply affect is involved in the politics of the everyday, and how domestic practices of citizenship can enable us to connect emotional attachment (where and how we feel at home) with an 'extroverted sense of place', in turn, developing an extroverted sense of belonging.

The visceral cosmopolitanism effected by *English Family China* enables the stronger sense of participatory belonging, as a kind of transitive, affective agency, to emerge. This sense of belonging is critically bound to thinking through intersectional concepts of citizenship and subjectivity, where intersectionality is understood as a practice, rather than an object. As Floya Anthias has argued, intersectionality is 'a social process related to practices and arrangements, giving rise to particular forms of positionality for social actors'.[26] The significance of connecting place-making with belonging becomes apparent in situations where subjectivity, participation and positionality meet – one such locus resides in the vital exchange between global citizenship and contemporary transnational art.

Returning to the insights afforded by exploring the collaborative film installation *Passage* in terms of 'practising place', it is clear that the extensive connections between the work's 'internal' dynamics (the performance of ritual spaces and activities) and its experience as a performed space (as a cinematic installation) enable many different participant–viewers to engage with it affectively and to negotiate a position with/in it. The work provides the conditions by which we can engage in the process of intersectionality and explore the practices that generate social positionality. The work demonstrates that spaces are not fixed, but rather are formed through inter-subjective negotiation. The ramification of this is that the processes of negotiation, rather than the spaces themselves, become the position from which mobile, but material, citizenship may be interpellated.

Arguing that places are negotiable, indeed mutable, does not suggest that they are empty; the practices of negotiation through which subjects and spaces are mutually constituted are always, already marked, constrained by the material conditions of their past and present, but able to be reconfigured in the future. I would argue that this definition of positionality runs counter to conventional concepts of citizenship that are guaranteed by fixed senses of place and unmarked universality. Constructing citizenship beyond spatial stasis and an undifferentiated universality can be a daunting exercise, but it is also empowering and profoundly responsible. Positionality is critical to this endeavour: positionality is the locus from which we undertake to converse with others in the world, negotiate our sense of place, power and belonging, and take responsibility for the multiple economies through which these exchanges occur. If global citizenship is to be effected as anything more than a woolly ideal, it is through such positional negotiation, by acknowledging difference and securing extensive, transitive connections with others. This is the positionality through which (as opposed to the position from which) we might claim a sense of world citizenship and participate in its configuration.

It is at the point of its configuration that art can have a significant impact. Configuring citizenship in these terms is not a unique act, it is a repetitive, performative process that continues throughout our lives. We learn to belong, how to live together in difference by questioning our assumptions about

ourselves and others and finding spaces, forms and figurations through which to imagine and inhabit the world in new ways. Art has an important role to play in figuring these potential yet actualising spaces, by providing aesthetic passages that connect us in transitive economies, rather than divide us in our diversity. In her work on trauma and affect, Bennett has made a similar suggestion concerning art's productive role within the spatial construction of subjectivity, arguing that 'by actualizing a set of spatial relationships, art is able to examine the nature of the body's relationship to space – and thus the very conditions of perception that determine various modes of inhabitation'.[27]

As Sydney's pedestrians move through Martin Square, a house, the ghostly residue of European colonisation, materialises in vapour. The space becomes an event, a participatory map-making activity encountered by the city's residents and tourists alike. Some will know Sydney's history intimately, perhaps be part of the Aboriginal community, others will be the descendants of settlers and later immigrants, still more will be newcomers or visitors, drawn by Sydney's global prominence as a tourist destination. All will be positioned in this 'extroverted' space in terms of its history and its potential future and, in negotiating this temporary map, will connect the corporeal, colonial, global, transitive and affective economies that enable us to participate in the political and aesthetic practices that can configure differentiated belonging.

Chapter 4

Landing – imaginative engagement

Landing – staircase: platform at top or between two flights

Landing – crossing; practices of the interfaces, intervals and interstices[1]

Landing – arrival at a stage or place of rest, reflection

Longing: the permeable subject, becoming

With its evocative title and material double-play, Hossein Valamanesh's work of 1997, *Longing/Belonging*, is often described as articulating the artist's own experience of migration from Iran to Australia in the 1970s and the concomitant negotiation between two cultures that this entailed. Installed in the space of the gallery, the work consists of two interconnected pieces: a Persian carpet whose central rondel has been charred, and a photograph showing the carpet, sited in a landscape in Northern Australia, with a fire burning on it. The photograph documents the past event, the aesthetic ritual that produced the work, while the presence of the charred carpet in the gallery powerfully returns the performance to the present, bridging the chasm between our physical encounter with the work of art, here and now, and the eloquent gestures that inscribed its surfaces, there and then.

In a telling turn of phrase, Nikos Papastergiadis questioned the work: 'Is this an unhomely arrival or the coexistence of two types of landing in a strange landscape?'[2] In Valamanesh's work, there is not a singular location that is, forever or immutably, home, but rather, the record of an elemental act that has transformed the material trace of the past, remembered home within the present: an unhomely arrival, a home (be)coming. Albeit unwittingly, Papastergiadis' question brings us directly to the figure of 'landing', the figure through which this chapter proceeds.

In a simple sense, a landing is an architectural motif, the space at the top of stairs or between flights that allows the climber to take a breath, select a course, and move on. Significantly, it implies a stage within a wider journey,
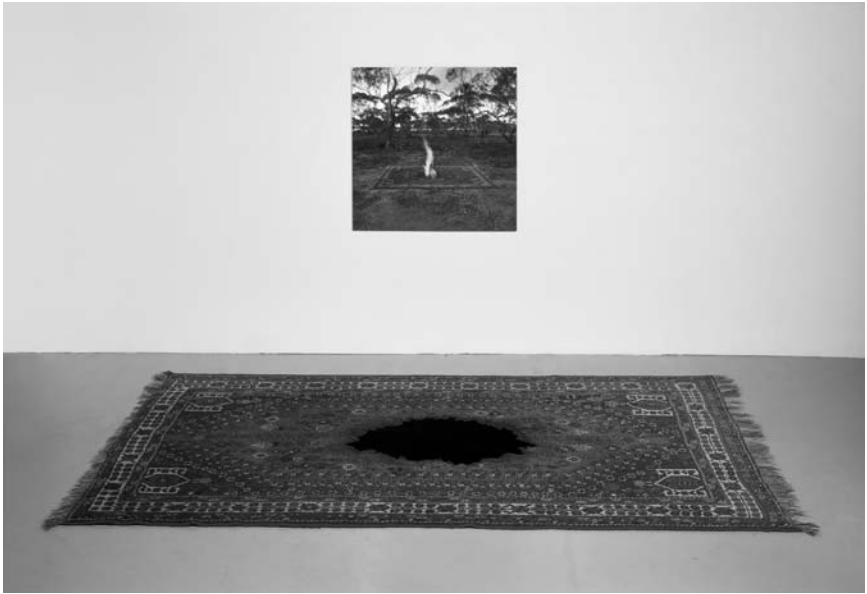
Figure 4.1 Hossein Valamanesh, *Longing/Belonging* (1997)

rather than an end in itself. This implication is sometimes obscured when landing is taken to be an arrival, a point of completion, the final destination obtained. That gesture fixes landing, and the one who lands, in a teleological relationship with time and space; it is landing as predestination, as a carefully-laid plan being brought to its final, determinate end. It is a sense of landing to which I do not subscribe and which has little to offer the argument being made here.

By contrast, remembering the physical force of the architectural figure is a welcome reminder of the open-ended, interstitial potential of landing. Landings are pauses, moments frequently marked by an extraordinary intensity of self-reflection and the possibility of setting a new course, of opening oneself to a new direction, not from an ahistorical 'empty' starting point, but from the material legacy of the journey undertaken thus far. Landing is the promise of the future that does not simply forget the past, but can transform it, through practices of the interfaces, of those spaces that bring us face-to-face with ourselves and others, with our ethical relation *within* the world of which we are always, already, a part.

Landing is both a noun and a verb, it is a crossing between object and process, an event. Likewise, the title of Valamanesh's work, *Longing/Belonging*, is a crossing that evokes a complex conceptual and affective territory through an eloquent economy of means. I would suggest that engaging with the terms set out by the title offers a useful starting point in thinking

through the problem of the time and space of the subject-in-process, and that that problem is crucial to anyone seeking an adequate means by which to figure the experience of migration and the potential of transnational, cross-cultural communication to establish a cosmopolitan imaginary.

Longing has many nuanced variants, most of which focus on the past, on the intense desire to return to a moment now gone or to retrieve an object now lost.[3] Longing in this sense links to nostalgia, wistfulness and, of course, homesickness, that term used especially to describe exiles or migrants who forever seek the source of their identity in the departed home, homeland or nation, and to which, of course, they can never truly return. No doubt many exiles have been lost to just this kind of longing, forever engaged in the futile quest to return to or retrieve the past.

But the etymology of longing is more evocative than this singular reading permits; the Old English springs from a Germanic source, *verlangen*, to desire. Desire need not be backward-looking, longing need not seek the past, but, instead, may describe our avidity, ambition and aspiration for the future, for the possibility of beauty and wonder yet to come. As the opposite of indifference, longing embodies us, locates us as desiring agents within the world, a world that is forever in flux and which, thus, unfolds its potential at every turn. Longing is the very essence of creative engagement in the world, it has a powerful generative capacity, it *makes*.[4] To long in this sense advances, moves forward, drives change and opens the desiring subject to alterity, to the new and, significantly, to others. Creative gestures borne of longing are thus the materialization of our desire for/with others in the world and our hopes and aspirations to change its contours in future. Longing is neither backward-looking nor teleological by necessity; it can be, instead, open, permeable and emergent.

But what of Valamanesh's word-play, of his conjunction between longing and belonging? Again, I would argue that this is not as simple as it might at first seem. Like longing, belonging is frequently associated with the experience of the migrant, with the establishment of community (or its impossibility). In this sense, belonging can be collapsed into a state of fixity or permanence, or used to close ranks – 'you don't belong here'. Additionally, belonging has a strong relationship to notions of home and homeland, to the acquisition of identity and status through an association with, or a belonging to, a specific and identifiable geo-political territory and/or culture. To belong is often conflated with being at home and, where homes are defined as fortresses, belonging (or not) can be a vexed question.

But belonging can be reconfigured to admit of change, development and multiplicity – what Elspeth Probyn has compellingly called 'outside belonging'.[5] Not coincidentally, Probyn's work calls for the development of creative tropes that permit us to articulate belonging otherwise; in my terms, as mobile, mutable and yet thoroughly embodied, as cognisant of the past but not imprisoned by it, capable of linking the material effects with the affective

dynamics of be(com)ing at home. Here we are closer to the conception of belonging that resides at its etymological base – going along with – travelling together, taking the same path, sharing the journey. It is a belonging linked not to a fixed origin point, but to wayfaring, to the future and to the active generation of meaning between 'fellow travellers', communicating across differences. The agency of belonging is collective flow, not isolated dam-building; selves who belong undertake an active form of inter-subjective engagement, rather than a passive assumption of position through definition, through reference to the past or an originary home.

I would argue that the cathected pairing *Longing/Belonging* figures landing in a profoundly apt and unusually succinct way, one that enables us to explore the experience of migration as a future-oriented process, premised upon the permeability of the emergent subject. The same can be argued regarding the visual and material qualities of the work. It is comprised, essentially, of four elements: the Persian carpet, the landscape, the fire and the photograph. Each element speaks to the generative potential of longing and to the aspiration of the wayfarer for belonging through connections across multiple differences. Taken together, they provide a landing, a space in which we might also stop, reflect and open ourselves to the potential afforded by a journey no longer tethered to a presumed destination.

In one sense, the carpet is the most quotidian of the elements, a motif indicative of home and hearth, of home-making and settlement. But, as a domestic object, the carpet is also steeped in histories of migration, trade and transit. Carpets are not fixed to a single space, they are quickly rolled and carried by the itinerant, able to be unfurled as needed to provide comfort in even the most inhospitable circumstances. Persian carpets, specifically, are embedded within a tradition of trade and exchange that has long connected the region we now call the Middle East with the rest of the world. The mythic status of Persian carpets (magic/flying carpets) further develops this legacy of movement, and reminds us that Valamanesh's carpet is as much about the remarkable narrative of transnational migration as it is about the moment of settlement. The Persian carpet, then, acts as a multivalent symbol of displacement and emplacement, connecting their utilitarian purposes with a powerful imaginative resonance, bringing traders, collectors and storytellers together through a global economy of domestic exchange.

The landscape of Northern Australia is stark, beautiful and unmistakable; its vast skies, red earth and combination of flora and fauna are unique in the world. Indigenous Australians inhabited this land for thousands of years before European settlement, and their patterns of inhabitation acknowledged movement, change and interplay with the environment as mutually sustaining. In general terms, this was utterly misunderstood by the settlers who first arrived – they could not recognise these practices of inhabitation as settlement in their terms, bound, as they were, to stasis and the maintenance of hard-and-fast borders. Settlement meant bending the environment to your will, making

the earth conform and mapping it as owned territory. It is hardly original to point out that our homes are not simply given to us, but are made, sometimes with imagination and ingenuity, other times with force. The Europeans who made this land their home used both their ingenuity and the force of their technology to chart the space and transform what they termed *Terra nullius* into Australia.[6]

The central creative gesture of the work, the fire, connects the Persian carpet with the land, Iran with Australia, and longing with belonging. Fire destroys, but it also purifies and generates the new. In the Zoroastrian tradition of ancient Persia, a tradition invoked by Valamanesh's work, agiaries are ritual spaces in which fires are maintained, consecrated and used for worship by devotees preparing themselves for contact with the sacred. Importantly, these fires can be transported to enable purification rituals to take place in new spaces and for new zones of sacramental contact to emerge. Fire is likewise pivotal to the Australian bush, where its awesome power of destruction is matched only by its extraordinary generative potential; huge swathes of forest burn to enable new growth.

The location of Valamanesh's ritual fire was therefore not random, not dislocated from either place he called 'home'. The fire set on the Persian carpet recognised and honoured the past while materially transforming it to enable the possibility of the future. The gesture was neither destructive nor backward-looking, it was not a nostalgic retreat to a lost homeland, but a longing advance, a landing open to the infinity of the future.

The Persian carpet, landscape and fire were brought together as an event, a temporal and spatial gesture marking the site of a landing. That landing existed first in the ritual act and again, perpetually, in the photographic document that marked it. The link between the two is indexical, and siting the charred carpet next to the photographic image in the installation of the work reinforces this link, bringing the material trace of the event into contact with its audience, making it the premise of our engagement with the piece. More than this, I would suggest that the charred carpet puts a hold on the possibility of infinite regress afforded by the photograph alone; that is, the photograph's inherent invocation of loss, and the nostalgic, backward-looking longing that this entails, are transformed by our present encounter with the sheer physical force of the object *with us* in the space.

The elements composed in *Longing/Belonging* create a landing, a moment filled with potential, marked by the intensity of its self-reflection and inviting our own. The work advances, the fire clears, our longing transforms into ambition, aspiration – where have I been, where shall I go and how should I prepare myself to be changed? This is not the coloniser coming to dominate the indigenous; there is no gesture here that would imply 'eating the other'.[7] Rather, we arrive at a stage of vital preparation for the encounter that will reconstitute us both in our mutual belonging; we prepare for the journey that will bring us together with others, we prepare to 'reground'.[8] And in

this gesture, I would argue, we meet the very possibility of a cosmopolitan imagination.

In her compelling work on creolisation, Mimi Sheller has provided an evocative definition for the process of belonging as 'grounded in movement, difference and transformation, rather than stasis or permanence'.[9] She calls this 'achieved indigeneity':

> In every case, though, the word [creole] carries the connotation of what could be called an achieved indigeneity. That is to say, it refers to a process of being uprooted from one place and regrounded in another such that one's point of origin loses its significance and one's place of arrival becomes 'home' … Creolization (becoming Creole) can therefore be understood as a process of achieving an indigenous status of belonging to a locale through the migration and recombination of diverse elements that have been loosed from previous attachments and have reattached themselves to a new place of belonging.[10]

Achieved indigeneity, then, recognises identity and belonging in change and in the shifting coordinates that subjects acquire through both dynamic inter-subjectivity and cathexis, the reattachment of desire and affect to the new. We are thoroughly grounded within the world, yet not bound to stasis by it. Achieved indigeneity understands the subject who advances, moves on, never ceases to develop in and through their permeability. Indeed, I would argue more strongly that the longing for belonging is ambitious, productive and, importantly, political in its ramifications.

Rosi Braidotti draws out this political valence in no uncertain terms in her work on nomadic subjectivity; as she argues, nomadic subjects are a 'political fiction' designed to enable strategic border-crossings. As 'fictions', they are critically related to her wider project of finding rich figurations for the political and poetic transformation of the present:

> I do not believe you can separate the question of style from political choices. Part and parcel of accepting the post-modern transnational economy we live in is the elaboration of styles and forms of representation that are suitable to our historical situation.[11]

As conceived by Braidotti, nomadic subjectivity has much in common with Sheller's notion of achieved indigeneity. As an 'intellectual style', nomadism provides a 'theoretical tent' for our 'situated heterogeneity',[12] or, in the terms of my argument here, it enables us to create our homes wherever we may be, using materials close at hand, that are transformed through the cathectic power of longing to belong. These practices of the interfaces foster our landings and invite others to engage imaginatively with them. Such engagements are at the heart of a cosmopolitanism that is embodied,

situated and responsible, and where art might play an active role in its inscription.

Valamanesh's work is profoundly political, where, as Marion Pastor Roches put it, politics are understood 'in and as art … an art of locating'.[13] I would go further to argue that figures and politics are mutually constitutive; we do not sustain a loss in their productive translation/transformation, we gain the creative potential of desiring agency toward that which is yet to come. In *Longing/Belonging*, we are returned that which could be lost in translation: the open-ended future and our powerful connections to others in the world.

Found in translation

In 2007, Johanna Hallsten produced a dual-sited, 'location-specific' work of art, *Sounds Like It*. At the work's core was the question of translation and the potential it has as a practice to engender the new. In *Sounds Like It*, translation does not figure loss – the loss of originary meaning or identity – but instead, compels desire and knowledge forward toward creative acts of (mis)understanding and visceral forms of conversation.[14] In this way, Hallsten's work develops spaces that act as transcultural contact zones, landings that enable productive, participatory and fully aesthetic crossings between subjects and objects to take place.

Figure 4.2 Johanna Hällsten, *Sounds Like It* (2007)

Sounds Like It brought two botanical gardens into dialogue through a series of installations and interventions that took place simultaneously during a four-month period at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh and the Kunming Institute of Botany in the Yunan Province, China. Describing the work is not a simple task; each garden was the site of multiple modes of intervention, from sound pieces to installed objects (small porcelain birds, photographs floating in pools, redrawn signs with hybrid botanical details), and the two sites were connected through live streaming over the web for the duration of the work [colour plate 14]. Negotiating the complex terrain of translation was critical to every aspect of *Sounds Like It*, and its realisation demonstrates that this terrain exceeds linguistic conventions to collide, forcibly, with the senses, embodiment and affectivity. Translation counts on materiality, rather than negating it through some seamless alignment of meaning, and where it 'fails', where the seams are permitted to become part of the fabric of our dialogues, sites can emerge that engender new conversations with/in difference. *Sounds Like It* took the risk of exposing and attenuating these seams in a number of specific ways.

Translations had to occur even to begin the project; three languages linked the institutions: Chinese, English and the Latin 'bridge' of botanical naming conventions that have been accepted as standard throughout the world.[15] Yet another language subtended the work, Hallsten's first language, Swedish. At some point during the project, every individual necessary to its realisation had to confront and use another('s) language, making its structures and symbols signify meaningfully, while being aware that this hesitant engagement with speech and word could never produce self-same understanding. But many times, where the seams opened, new and beautiful articulations across difference occurred: as subtle as the flash of recognition between Chinese visitors to Edinburgh on seeing Chinese symbols next to 'local' species, or as compelling as the realisation that the processes of drying botanical specimens in China were identical to the traditional print-making techniques Hallsten had learned years before in Sweden.[16]

These visceral moments of linguistic encounter, these translational landings, were intrinsic to the installation itself: one sound piece recorded an Anglophone speaker haltingly pronouncing the Latin names of species collected in Edinburgh and in Kunming, while multilingual translations of the names of living plants appeared on signs placed in each garden. We are estranged and made familiar at once in these acts of linguistic shadow-play; they serve to hold at bay our all too easy acceptance of the same, making us pause and reflect on the wonder of language and its ability to articulate us as subjects, however imperfectly, in vital connection with others in the world we share.

Translation was more than a motif in *Sounds Like It*, it was an operating method, a way of delineating the core concerns of cross-cultural engagement, and a practice through which to open the work to the emergence of new meanings in participatory encounters. Acts of translation occurred not only

between recognised languages, but between the languages as written and spoken, as graphemic text, registered through vision, and as sonic word, experienced aurally. Throughout the work, shifts between somatic levels were manifest materially; flowing between visual, auditory, olfactory and proprioceptive registers, participants in the gardens (and online when this locus was live) encountered text, spoken word, images, objects and articulated space. The materials were particular and resonant in their historical and conceptual trajectories: living plants becoming drawings, drawings becoming photographs, photographs becoming water; text becoming word, word becoming (bird)song, birdsong becoming language, universal and located at once [colour plate 15].

Sensory alignments are cultural,[17] 'nature' in botanical gardens is not natural, it is always, already, translated. Hallsten was aware of this throughout the production of the project, noting that the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh were decidedly visual spaces, in contrast to the gardens in Kunming, whose cartography and planting were steeped in traditional Chinese understandings of space, scent and sound. Likewise, the plants themselves are cultural objects – collected, displayed, studied, named, used, reproduced, crossed. Indeed, one of the most articulate translations within the work took the enculturation of nature as its starting point, using the dried specimens in Edinburgh's extensive collection to explore hybridity. The specimens are themselves astonishing objects, mainly kept out of public view; *Sounds Like It* rendered them visible through photography and drawing, translating them from object to image, and then combining their elements in extended composites, sited within the spaces of the gardens. In making her hybrids, Hallsten remained faithful to the textual debates (still being inscribed) in the specimens' files, to the present scientific classifications of family, and to the horticultural techniques of grafting. The resultant works were an exchange between art and science, an attention to the mechanisms that correspond within disciplines such that dialogues might emerge at their borders, enriching to both. It is telling that, after seeing her hybrids, the botanists working with Hallsten began to speculate on the possibility of the crossings she had imagined being effected in real terms.

The botanical gardens drawn into dialogue through the piece brought with them their languages, histories and disciplinary domains. To encounter them is to find a charged site at their interface, a landing, and to work through the levels of translation that they cannot help but bring to the encounter. These forms of translation are a modulation between object and process, they do not privilege the 'finished translation' as a thing, so much as the way the materials explored in the act of translation become other in the process. One potent form of this becoming other was explored in *Sounds Like It* through mimicry and mimesis, where the photograph likened itself to the plant or birdsong migrated across continents to become part of a new environment, such that indigenous birds began to sing in response. But it is not simply about

mimicry, it is about desire and the longing to belong, to communicate with other subjects and to allow ourselves to become other. It is an orientation within the world. *Sounds Like It* moved across sensory registers, with their concomitant hierarchies and socio-cultural borders, with an eloquence derived not from presumed fluency, but from aspiration and an openness to the meanings that unfold in practices of speaking in the interval.

At a number of points in the making of *Sounds Like It*, Hallsten encountered her inability to translate, formally, the materials around her, a failure to speak the language, be it Chinese, Latin or the 'conventional languages' of other disciplines, cultures and things. These were some of the most productive moments of the piece, when Hallsten was obliged to 'make sense', literally, to turn back upon herself as a fully sensory subject and to encounter difference in its material force; here we move beyond the fear of loss in the act of translation towards its potential to generate the new and unexpected and open us to what cannot already be determined; and to be changed, ourselves, in that encounter. In her work on nomadic ethics, Braidotti offered the notion of hope in a parallel to my thinking here: '[h]ope carves out active trajectories of becoming and thus can respond to anxieties and uncertainties in a productive manner'.[18]

I would argue that the translational method Hallsten used to negotiate the cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary and transnational dynamics necessitated by opening a dialogue between Kunming and Edinburgh in *Sounds Like It* is akin to the ethical practice of the (hopeful) nomadic subject as conceived by Braidotti. Perhaps this ought not to surprise us, since Braidotti's work, like Hallsten's and my own, links feminist reconceptions of the subject as embodied with an ethical commitment to difference and a practical insistence on the potential of aesthetics to engender new political figurations. Feminism combines, as Braidotti argues, 'a strong critical and equally strong creative function. Faith in the creative powers of the imagination is an integral part of feminists' appraisal of embodiment and the bodily roots of subjectivity'.[19] If the ethical practice of the nomad turns toward articulating an aesthetic and spatial dialogue with/in difference, it is likely to produce a highly-charged, self-reflexive locus, open to an encounter with others and to change; it is likely, in other words, to materialise landing, the trope through which the present argument is configured.

If *Sounds Like It* can be understood to articulate landing in and through the composition of a dual-sited, location-specific work of art, the question of 'location-specificity'[20] is begged: what sort of space, place, site, location is the work, is this landing? In its inception and practices of production, it is closely allied to the notion of 'environment' as described in the work of scholars in the field of environmental aesthetics, such as Arnold Berleant. As Berleant wrote, environment is ' … a fusion of organic awareness, of meanings, both conscious and unaware, of geographical location, of physical presence, personal time, pervasive movement'.[21] Remaining with Berleant's description of

environment, two further points bear a critical relationship to the notion of landing. First, that environment is absolutely social: '[i]f art shapes experience to our vision of things, environment is an art, not of individuals but of society; the cumulative art of a culture'.[22] Second, that environment is participatory in the strongest sense – there is no outside of environment from which subjects might simply spectate: '[environment] demands full somatic involvement, joining physical perception with an imaginative and often a conscious association of memories and meanings, so that a perceptual continuity develops between appreciator and art object'.[23]

There is no outside of *Sounds Like It* from where it could appear as an object to a viewer; an imaginative engagement with the work is premised upon the strong sense of participation described so eloquently by Berleant.[24] The work demands our somatic involvement and creates a perceptual continuity between us and it. I would go further to suggest that the work, as environment, constitutes the 'us' (and, mutually, instantiates itself) in the charged landing of this productive encounter. There is no 'artwork' and no 'viewer', but an engagement between them enacted as a process of multiple translations, translations that by their nature cannot but exceed solipsism to insist on inter-subjective dialogues, engendering our encounter in and through the many languages of others. *Sounds Like It* materialises a space in which language makes, fails, circulates, connects; and where, significantly, its transmedial movement is cathectic. The process of translation here is not one of loss, but of generative desire, a desire to connect with others across national, cultural, linguistic and disciplinary limits, across the historical residue that reinforces our isolation. It is the desire to forge a cosmopolitan imaginary.

In the context of the complex histories it negotiates, *Sounds Like It* can be understood, politically, as a 'contact zone', a term used by Mary Louise Pratt to define the space(s) where the colonisers interact with the colonised, where improvised languages develop in everyday usage, rather than by top-down imposition.[25] To the extent that *Sounds Like It* fosters transnational dialogue and the emergence of improvised languages, it articulates a profoundly communicative and participatory contact zone, a zone that, in an era marked by globalisation, cannot be divorced from ethical concerns. Transnational communication is marked by iniquitous power relationships and geo-political struggles for the control of meaning. To build community in this context does not mean forgetting the material conditions through which we converse, but rather finding a way, as Seyla Benhabib argued, to construct a community of enquirers, fully embodied and embedded, capable of 'civic friendship and solidarity' within those conditions.[26] Building on the communicative discourse ethics of Jurgen Habermas,[27] Benhabib confronts the problem of *how* we (can) communicate, *how* we (can) establish participation in its strong sense, since these are the bedrock of an ethical conversation that acknowledges difference and situation without simply collapsing into the moral incoherence of radical relativism.

I would suggest that *Sounds Like It* goes some way toward addressing these concerns in its production of a translational environment that, by necessity, interpellates subjects as participatory, or, as I would prefer, engaged in a fully somatic, imaginative negotiation of its spaces, objects, images, texts and sounds; without the bodily engagement, there is no *work* of art, it simply does not *make* (anything). But more than this, the work makes difference concrete, rendering its processes of translation and transformation powerfully present for those who engage in it. This is significant; following Benhabib, moral reciprocity requires us to take an imaginative leap into the place of the other, but too often this entails the projection of ourselves onto the image of the other, or the reinstatement of subject–object relations at the expense of subject–subject exchange. To break this cycle, she argues, we need the 'voice' of the other to be kept with us, we need to make others concrete so that we can maintain dialogue instead of slipping back again into monologue.[28]

As a charged site, open to the future, to alterity and desire, *Sounds Like It* enacts landing as a practice of translation in the contact zone, a practice of the interface that brings the concrete materiality of difference into connection with us as fully sensory subjects. If we hear the voice of the other speaking their/our words and speak with them, however hesitantly, we are propelled forward, with ambition, toward the possibility of new forms of belonging as yet unspoken, unimagined.

Constitutive imagination

Exploring the contact zones that configure landing as it is being used here, suggests understanding imaginative engagement as constitutive of subjectivity and identity, profoundly social and capable of propelling material change. This requires us to think through a stronger sense of imagination than is commonly applied to art and also to find a means by which to bring contemporary art into a more substantive dialogue with the ethical concerns of globalisation. While we pause to reflect on these issues we might, perhaps, have a cup of tea, a particular cup of tea: *Chai, as close as I could get* (Hossein Valamanesh, 1998).

Chai, as close as I could get is materially concise and conceptually succinct; a glass bowl of water rests on a plinth, lit from below. Floating, just, in the water is a glass cup filled with tea. The two fluids are held apart, and together, in glass and light; these most ordinary objects here articulate the everyday, transformed.

Tea in *Chai* is like the Persian carpet in *Longing/Belonging*, a decidedly domestic motif, but one that is embedded in global histories of trade, colonisation and transnational migration. Tea has been exported throughout the world for centuries and, at different moments in its long history of exchange, has been both a prized and a commonplace commodity. It is subject
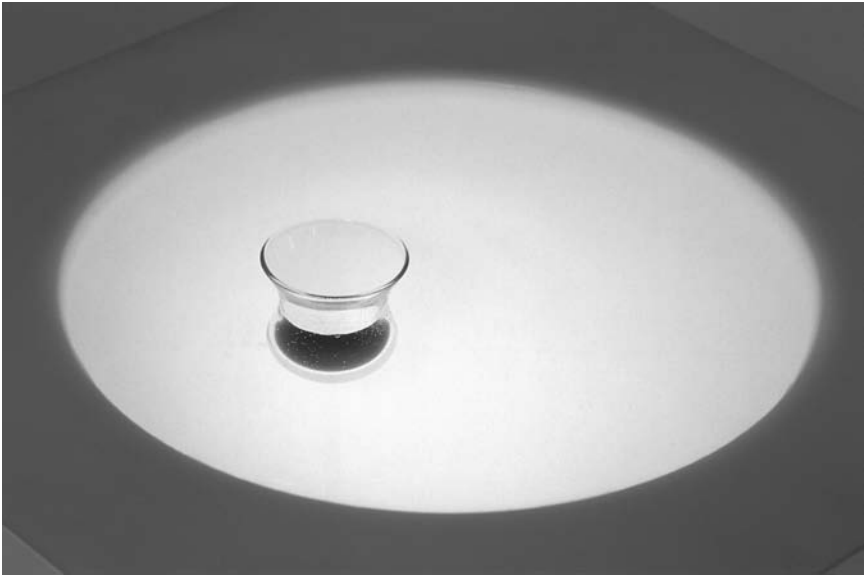
Figure 4.3 Hossein Valamanesh, *Chai, as close as I could get* (1998)

to complex practices of making/drinking, and to widespread, almost thought-less mass consumption; as a material, it is poised between ritual distance and absolute familiarity, a pivot that makes it an apt reference point for a landing, for a space that connects the familiar, homely past with the possibility of movement toward an as-yet unknown future, rich with potential. It can figure the ambition of the desiring subject with remarkable clarity, while not losing its hold on the practice of everyday life, through which we might seek trans-formation and engender becoming.

My choice of Michel de Certeau's formulation, the practice of everyday life,[29] is precise. His arguments concerning the significance of our ways of using received materials, and of 'making do', to the formation of ourselves as social subjects, are related to linguistic pragmatics, a relationship that is helpful in thinking through some of the ramifications of *Chai, as close as I could get*. Pragmatics is concerned with our actual, contextually rich and specific use of language, rather than the codified rules of linguistic systems. In this sense, it attends to the concrete, rather than the abstract, and the 'bottom-up', rather than 'top-down' production of communication between speakers – just the sort of practical linguistic encounter that takes place in a contact zone, in a space where we keep the concrete other always within reach.

In the work of de Certeau, these principles are extended to thinking through our engagement with speech and the material culture of the everyday.

Valamanesh's work, *Chai, as close as I could get*, stages a multilayered dialogue/translation ('chai' is farsi for tea, the glass cup is a souvenir from a trip to Turkey, the tea was infused in Australia) as that which can only ever approach the original, never make it the same ('as close as I could get'). But in this realisation, and the concomitant relinquishing of the need to assimilate difference, there is the establishment of a bond between the self and the other, between the artist's articulation of the longing of the migrant to reground and the aspirations of those who engage with the work to hear him. The longing remembers the past, but advances by establishing a communicative intimacy with us, in the present; we share in the becoming close, without having to fetishise an 'authentic' origin. We are invited, in the 'failure' to reproduce the imagined chai, to enjoy *this* cup of tea, we are offered the hospitality of a fellow wayfarer, as he makes do and, in that, transforms the materials to hand toward an emergent future.[30]

And the transformation is substantial. In the work, a glass cup of tea and a bowl of water become a luminous point of reflection, both literally and figuratively [colour plate 16]. The work is poised at stillness, but a stillness borne of fluid motion, rather than rigidity. Its stillness is a landing, a charged pivot between past and future, and it is *inviting*. That point is not insignificant; the work is on an intimate and corporeally legible scale, it emits a beckoning light, it offers itself, quietly, in repose, to those viewers willing to pause and participate, to those who will engage in the encounter and make sense, full somatic sense, of what it is they see. Remaining at the level of the disembodied 'eye/I', the work is of negligible impact, pure abstract formalism; its compelling hospitality is given through the close sensory attention of the participant. *Chai* is the site of an approach to the embodied other, a space that opens to the wonder of the future, pursued through reciprocal affective permeability.

The notion of reciprocal affective permeability is critical to the present discussion for two reasons. First, it provides the motor force of imagination, at the nexus between individuals 'imagining that' (a condition could pertain), and the cultural imaginary, the weight of collective 'fictions' that make sociality (and social change) possible. Second, it suggests a way to think through the articulation of hybrid/nomadic subject positions that moves beyond the consumption or assimilation of difference. In both these ways, it is imperative to the cosmopolitan project that resides at the heart of my argument in this volume.

The strong sense of imagination that I am mobilising here is indebted to the work of scholars such as Edward Casey, Paul Ricoeur and Herbert Marcuse,[31] but most directly allied to the re-reading of Benedict Spinoza undertaken by Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd in *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza Past and Present*. In their work, Gatens and Lloyd connected Spinoza's conception of the imagination with some of the key ethical imperatives of the present, namely, our collective responsibility for brutal acts of genocide in the past and

the struggle to acknowledge difference as the cornerstone of a more ethical engagement with the world in future. Specifically, they argued:

> Sociability is inherently affective … Our identities are constituted through sympathetic and imaginative forming of wider wholes with others rather than through a merely cognitive grasp of pre-existing relations … Imaginative constructions of who and what we are, are 'materialised' through the forms of embodiment to which those constructions give rise. The imagination may create fables, fictions or collective 'illusions', which have 'real' effects, that is, which serve to structure forms of identity, social meaning and value, but which, considered in themselves, are neither true nor false.[32]

Like Braidotti, who sees the subject as an 'integrated unity of affect and reason',[33] Gatens and Lloyd stress the interrelationship between the affective and cognitive dimensions of sociality. In this way, imagination plays a key role in enabling us to connect with others, to make ethical and political moves toward difference. It is also premised upon touching and being touched, on the power of cathexis to engender in us a sense of responsibility within the world that resides in more than our rational knowledge of the circumstances of others – a sense of responsibility borne of sympathy, compassion and care.

The strong sense of imagination drawn above is also linked to the power of social fictions to have 'real', material, consequences, to be constitutive of subjectivity and society.[34] Imagination entwines us with others, constitutes us through our inter-subjective engagement in the world. Imagination embodies and emplaces us, or as Casey put it:

> ' … we imagine with our bodies and in place, never without the ingredience and cooperation of both'.[35] And it does this at the level of affect, not 'personal feelings', but reciprocal permeability. Identities based on hard and fast boundaries are inherently limited;[36] they have no potential to open themselves to the future as it unfolds, but must hold fast to the past. They long for return and seek the same.

Chai, as close as I could get, transforms longing to the desire for nearness, 'as close as I could get', but not return or assimilation. In this gesture, it accommodates the other, it opens a pathway through permeability to political change. It imagines our relations with different others in the world as mutually constitutive rather than forged in violence or domination. In the quotidian poise of its landing, it figures a *cosmopolitan* imagination.

One of the most compelling explorations of proximity that respects difference and yields to becoming can be found in Luce Irigaray's *The Way of Love*.[37] This work is both a poetic treatise on the inter-subjective dynamics between individual, sexed subjects, and a powerful political project suggesting

the necessity of finding an adequate symbolic structure to admit of difference in a global world. The formulation 'as close as I could get' is particularly suggestive in light of Irigaray's insights. As she argues, simply living near the other does not suffice to put us into real contact with them. To truly welcome the other means to change yourself, not take them into your sameness:

> To approach implies rather becoming aware of the diversity of our worlds and creating paths which, with respect for this diversity, allow holding dialogues … [The] local, cultural, national proximity can even prevent the approach because the forgetting of the fact that going the path toward the other is never achieved, requires an unceasing effort and not a standing in the same.

And, what is this effort?

> It is a work of putting into relation – with oneself, with the world, with the other in respect of their difference, and also with a common universe – that manifests this real and that elaborates it.[38]

As an elaboration on the practice of everyday life, *Chai, as close as I could get* can be seen as an act of 'living intensely'.[39] It is an approach to the other, to the open-ended future, embedded in the material conditions of history – from the trade of tea to the migration of Valamanesh. *Chai* acknowledges the work of putting into relation, the unceasing imaginative effort that enables us to advance and aspire, not as isolated, disembodied, transcendent subjects, but in vital connection with others in the world. A cosmopolitan belonging, a way-faring with fellow travellers on an uncertain but desired road, needs moments of rest and reflection; we need landing to prepare us to become.

Afterword

On affirmative criticality

We would suggest that the challenge for transnational feminism is both critical and affirmative. First, it remains crucial to critique the gendered dimension of the international division of labour, which places women in highly differentiated and unequal positions in the global economy … Second, transnational feminism has an affirmative dimension in the desire to create ethical forms of solidarity with others.

Sara Ahmed *et al.*, 2003.[1]

… [E]thics is a set of optional rules that assess what we do, what we say, in relation to the ways of existing involved. We say this, do that: what way of existing does it involve? There are things one can only do or say through mean-spiritedness, a life based on hatred or bitterness toward life. Sometimes it takes just one gesture or word. It's the styles of life involved in everything that make us this or that … What are we 'capable' of seeing and saying (in the sense of uttering)? But if there's a whole ethics in this, there's an aesthetics too.

Gilles Deleuze, 1986.[2]

Marcuse moved further ahead. He did not hesitate to advocate, in an affirmative mood, the fulfilment of human needs, of the need for an undeserved happiness, of the need for beauty, of the need for peace, calm and privacy. … With him negative thinking retained the dialectical trust in determinate negation, in the disclosure of positive alternatives.

Jürgen Habermas, 1988.[3]

Placing excerpted passages next to one another is a form of bricolage, a method by which the close reader comes into contact with the varied tones and timbres of texts and sets up the conditions that might enable them to resonate with one another. Like collage, textual bricolage is an activity that neither fetishises the fragment nor renders it impotent. Rather, fragments are opened to exploration as specific moments within a wider frame of articulation that crystallise thought without necessarily fixing its borders or setting the limits of its connection with other moments of thought.

At the start of this volume, three works of art were collaged, in the sense being proposed here, to enable a set of architectonic figurations to emerge. Here, as the volume ends, a bricolage of three textual fragments serves a similar purpose – to introduce a mode of praxis that I would suggest informs the whole of this volume, what I am calling *affirmative criticality*.

Drawing out elements from the bricolage, my use of the term emerges as both an aspiration (a fervent desire for the potential of critical thinking to engender and affirm a hopeful, indeed better and more humane, future) and as a method of intellectual analysis and engagement. It is drawn directly from my commitment to feminism and my understanding of feminism as a powerful praxis, a crossing that undoes the oppositions between theory and practice, selves and others, the local and the global, aiming toward a productive politics and an empathic ethics. I share with Ahmed, Castaneda, Fortier and Sheller an acknowledgement of the material inequities of our time, of a world marked by extreme differentials of power through globalisation, but also their step forward toward a positive ethical engagement with others that begins to redefine the world.

In an appropriately rhizomatic move, the fragment from Deleuze in this bricolage resounds with the ethical dimension already emerging, but redirects this through aesthetics and, in particular, an aesthetics of subjectification, of the development of the subject in and through 'styles of life'. Again, I share concerns with Deleuze here, and have argued throughout the present volume that ethics and aesthetics have significant areas of intersection and, more strongly, mutual constitution. Where the response-ability of the subject meets a subject's responsibility with/in the world, aesthetics and ethics play in harmony. Likewise, I share an affinity with the impatience Deleuze expressed in this excerpt (and elsewhere, particularly in interviews) with the constant barrage of 'mean-spiritedness' that masquerades as critical analysis or intellectual endeavour.

It is this mean-spiritedness that Habermas addressed in his review of the work of Marcuse, from which the text fragment above was taken, arguing that critical thought (and critical thinkers) need not simply be negative and de(con)structive to maintain the rigour of their enquiry. Examining the work of Marcuse over a long period, Habermas identified a strong affirmative vein centred upon an ability to recognise that intellectual work becomes valuable – politically, socially and personally – when it aspires to higher ground and enables us to effect changes that share in those aspirations. This is not the work of negative criticism, however sharply focused, however accurate in its demonstration of the flaws of the past and present; to move forward, critical thinking needs to take the risk of affirmation. Affirmative criticality does not seek solely to analyse and interpret things as they are or have been (present, past); to engage actively with the constitution of the future and proposing the future is, by necessity, speculative and contingent. Therein resides the risk, as well as the potential, at the heart of affirmative criticality.

The present volume takes this risk willingly, offering its arguments as spec-
ulative propositions for the role of art in the constitution of ethical subjects
and an approach to living in the world more responsibly in the future than we
have, in many respects, to date. The risks are straightforward: aspects of my
argument might be read variously as 'utopian' or 'naive', and the fact that
I readily acknowledge the contingency of art (in its making and its consump-
tion) and, likewise, of the formation of located subject-positions, means that
the book cannot pretend to provide a simple answer or solution to the pressing
issues facing us within a globalised world. But I would argue that this con-
tingency and aspiration for the future are precisely where the strengths of the
figurations proposed throughout this text reside, and that they do far more by
enabling us to engage the complexities of the questions raised than by offering
an over-simplified solution.

This volume argues that works of art have the power to articulate against
the grain, materialise ideas as yet unthought and, through these means, enable
us to conceive the world differently. Understood in this way, art is a very real
form of engagement with/in the world, rather than an escape from it or, worse
yet, some decorative extra, able to be marginalised at will by those who would
seek to deny its force. What it is not, however, is predictable; we cannot
predetermine either the subtle shifts involved in the making of artworks, or
the full force of their impact upon participant spectators. Art operates most
powerfully in the registers of affect, imagination and resonance[4] and, because
of this, it invites dialogue, acknowledges (and even courts) the generative
possibilities of multiple meanings, and converses readily in and through
difference.

Affect, imagination and resonance do not lend themselves to the interpretive
mechanisms of instrumental positivism; more bluntly, they do not reduce
easily to the yes or no statement, preferring the more evasive and creative logic
of the maybe, or the may be. But it would be mistaken to think that the space
of the maybe is without critical inflection or impervious to rigorous enquiry.
As discussed elsewhere in this volume, both the so-called 'affective turn' and
the concept of imagination have suffered from their associations with intuition,
personal feeling and emotion, being cast as 'irrational', solipsistic and beyond
the limits of argument or interrogation.

The present volume does not assent to the negation of the significance of the
affective or aesthetic levels of subjectivity in this way; we are propelled to
think critically when we are moved to do so, and our ability to respond to the
world is intrinsically social, educable and connective, rather than isolating.
Arguably, these terms, however contingent in their manifestations, are the very
premise upon which sociality and knowledge are based, and a rigorous enquiry
into their operation underpins any serious intervention into the constitution of
truly intersubjective engagement and exchange. To paraphrase Deleuze, what
we are capable of seeing and saying is a negotiable terrain, and our journeys
through this space both respond to and map our styles of life, making our

'selves' the quintessential aesthetic product. Affirmative criticality is able to engage productively with such an open conception of the subject and with intersubjective agency, since it is willing to take the risk of contingency that these bring in their wake.

In a similar vein, the question of the cosmopolitan, which became central to the present volume through the process of writing, is vexed by both its presumed Euro-centric elitism and its suggestions of a utopian (read 'hopelessly naive') vision of the future. Cosmopolitanism is a complex concept that requires us to remain critical of its terms, yet its centrality to any project seeking to understand how we might move toward a more global sense of political engagement and ethical responsibility compels us to affirm it, at least in part(s). If we are working toward a notion of the subject as embodied, embedded, response-able and responsible *with/in* the world, then we encounter the very exciting possibilities that cosmopolitanism offers in terms of communicating with others in and through difference. I would argue even more strongly that, in relation to thinking through the potential of contemporary art to provide meaningful cross-cultural conversation and the space in which to imagine ourselves and others as fellow wayfarers, 'at home everywhere', the cosmopolitan imagination necessitates an attitude of affirmative criticality. It is a case in point.

Thus I bring this volume to an open ending, rather than closure, in the spirit of offering more possibility than prescription and more hope than resignation. While not blind to the inhumane events that surround us daily, I remain aware of, and inspired by, the generosity that resides at the very core of humanity – a generosity that requires attention and effort to develop and maintain, a generosity that requires affirmative criticality as a style of life.

Notes

Introduction

1 The form 'women making art' is used here in preference to either 'women artists' or 'women's art'; cf. Meskimmon, Marsha, *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

2 http://this.is/parsberg/

3 On belonging, cf. Hedetoft, Ulf and Mette Hjort (eds), *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002; Yuval-Davis, Nira, Kalpana Kannabiran and Ulrike M. Vieten (eds), *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, London, Thousand Oaks, California and New Delhi: Sage, 2006; on dwelling, cf. Diprose, Rosalyn, *The Bodies of Women: Ethics, Embodiment and Sexual Difference*, London: Routledge, 1994; on hospitality as ethics, cf. Derrida, Jacques, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness (Thinking in Action)*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes, New York: Routledge, 2001.

4 I am aware that there has been work using the term 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' which, generally, uses the notion of 'aesthetic' differently from my use; most discussions of 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' refer to a notion of reified spectatorship, of aestheticising difference and enjoying a distanced view of exotic others in the world. I use 'aesthetic' in terms of an affective, perceptual and cognitive impact made through the senses, as an embodied and embedded (not distant!) engagement within the world.

5 Breckenridge, Carol, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty (eds), *Cosmopolitanism*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 7–8 – the editor's introduction actually places 'the cosmofeminine' at the heart of new thinking; Kearney, M., 'The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 1995, 547–65 also argues for the centrality of feminist theory to contemporary work on globalisation.

6 Appiah, Kwame Anthony, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2006, p. 85.

7 Wilson, Rob, 'A New Cosmopolitanism is in the Air: Some Dialectical Twists and Turns', in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (eds), *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, pp. 351–61, p. 355.

8 That I might be thought to be trying to salvage the wreckage of cosmopolitanism was pointed out to me by Gill Perry in a good-natured conversation; I note that I am not attempting such a thankless task.

9 Diprose, Rosalyn, *Corporeal Generosity: On Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas*, Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2002, p. 75.

10 Ibid., p. 125.

11 Braidotti, Rosi, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Cambridge: Polity, 2002, p. 2.

1 Foundation – dynamic ground

1 Yin's work has been included in such well-known exhibitions as the third *Asia Pacific Triennial* (Brisbane, 1999), *Inside/Out* (New York, 1998–99), *Cities on the Move: Urban Chaos and Global Change* (London *et al.*, 1999), *Text/Subtext* (Singapore, 2002), *How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age* (Minneapolis, 2003), *Home and Away* (Vancouver, 2003) and the 2004 São Paulo Biennale.

2 See *Sunday Times* supplement, 5 October 2008.

3 Saskia Sassen, 'Introduction: Locating Cities on Global Circuits', in Sassen, Saskia (ed.), *Global Networks; Linked Cities*, New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 10–36, pp. 2, 9.

4 Taylor, Peter J., Walker, D.R.F. and Beaverstock, J.V. 'Firms and their Global Service Networks', in Sassen, Saskia (ed.), *Global Networks*, op. cit., pp. 93–115, p. 96, 95.

5 Not coincidentally, Sassen has noted the rise of the global, metropolitan art market, with bi- and triennials, as part of the evidence of the primacy of a global cities model. See Saskia Sassen (ed.), *Global Networks*, op. cit., p. 3.

6 Ahmed, Sara, Claudia Castaneda, Anne Marie Fortier and Mimi Sheller (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, New York and Oxford: Berg, 2003, Introduction, pp. 1–22, p. 1 (the sentence was originally in italics).

7 Martin, Biddy and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Feminist Politics: What's Home Got To Do With It', in De Lauretis, Teresa (ed.) *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 191–212, pp. 191, 204; Massey, Doreen, 'A Global Sense of Place', *Marxism Today*, June 1991, pp. 24–29.

8 *Global Homes* was the working title of this book for some time.

9 Rapport, Nigel and Andrew Dawson (eds), *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998, p. 7. They cite Rouse, 1991 on 'plurilocal'.

10 Swalwell, Melanie, 'Contact Zones: Edge in *Portable Cities* and *FragMental Storm*' *New Zealand Journal of Media Studies*, 9 (1): 'Asian' Media Arts Practice in/and Aotearoa New Zealand, Wellington: New Zealand Electronic Text Centre, 2005, pp. 1–18. p. 4.

11 Gao Minglu interviewed by Christina Yu, 'Curating Chinese Art in the 21st Century: An Interview with Gao Minglu', *Yishu-Taipei*, 5 (1), 2006, 17–35, p. 32.

12 Heartney, Eleanor, 'Children of Mao and Coca-Cola', *Art in America*, 87 (3), March 1999, pp. 42–47.

13 Young, Iris Marion, 'House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme', in Mui, Constance L. and Julien S. Murphy (eds), *Gender Struggles: Practical Approaches To Contemporary Feminism*, Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002, pp. 314–46, p. 339.

14 Yin cited in Biennale of Sydney, *On Reason and Emotion* (Exhibition Catalogue), 2004, p. 222.

15 Diprose, Rosalyn, *The Bodies of Women: Ethics, Embodiment and Sexual Difference*, London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 18–19.

16 See Sundaram, Vivan, *The Sher-Gil Archive*, Exhibition Catalog, Budapest: Mücsarnok's Dorottya Gallery, 1995; New Delhi: Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre, 1996; Bombay (Mumbai): Gallery Chemuld, 1996.

17 In the passages concerning the Sher-Gil family I am using the forenames for clarity, as Sundaram does.

18 Both Lahore and Shimla are now in Pakistan, following partition; the family relocated and remained in India.

19 Sundaram, Vivan, *The Sher-Gil Archive*, op. cit., pp. 2–3, p. 2.

20 See for example Derrida, Jacques, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996; Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, London: Tavistock Press, 1972; Pollock, Griselda, *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

21 Paul Ricoeur, 'Archives, Documents, Traces' [1978] excerpt in Merewether, Charles, *The Archive*, London: Whitechapel and Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006, pp. 66–69. Trace is the indexical residue, the more than, of the event.

22 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The Rani of Simur: An Essay in Reading the Archives', in Merewether, Charles, *The Archive*, ibid., pp. 163–69.

23 Roberts, John, 'Indian Art, Identity and the Avant-Garde: The Sculpture of Vivan Sundaram', *Third Text*, 27, Summer 1994, 31–36.

24 Geeta Kapur, 'Dismantled Norms: Apropos Other Avant Gardes, in Turner, Caroline (ed.), *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005, pp. 46–100, p. 65.

25 Sundaram, Vivan, *Re-Take of Amrita*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2001.

26 15 x 26 inches, 2001, digital photograph. All photographs are by Umrao Singh Sher-Gil unless otherwise mentioned. From left: Indira, Paris, 1930; Umrao Singh and Vivan, Shimla, 1946; Marie Antoinette, Lahore, 1912; *Small Earring* (painting, 1893, Georg Hendrik Breitner); Amrita, Shimla, 1937; Amrita, Budapest, 1938, photo, Victor Egan.

27 Sundaram, Vivan, *Re-Take of Amrita*, op. cit., p. 55 uses the term triptych and notes that the work reads from right to left.

28 Nava, Mica, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007, pp. 8–14.

29 Nava, Mica, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*, ibid., p. 14.

30 Editors' introduction, 'Cosmopolitanisms', in Breckenridge, Carol, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty (eds), *Cosmopolitanism*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 1–14, pp. 1, 5, 11.

31 15 x 21 inches, 2001, digital photograph. All photographs are by Umrao Singh Sher-Gil unless otherwise mentioned. From left: Umrao Singh, Paris, early 1930s; Amrita, Bombay, 1936, photo, Karl Khandalavala; Marie Antoinette, Lahore, 1912; Indira, Paris, 1931.

32 Sundaram was well aware of these poses and the iconographies associated with them – see Sundaram, Vivan, *Re-Take of Amrita*, op. cit., p. 54.

33 Young, Iris Marion, 'House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme', op. cit., pp. 332–34.

34 Irene Gedalof, 'Taking (a) Place: Feminist Embodiment and the Regrounding of Community', in Ahmed, Sara *et al.*, *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, op. cit., pp. 91–113, p. 101.

35 Martin, Biddy and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Feminist Politics: What's Home Got To Do With It', in De Lauretis, Teresa (ed.) *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 191–212.

2 Threshold – infinite generosity

1 Olga M. Viso, 'Doris Salcedo: The Dynamic of Violence' in Benezra, Neal and Olga M. Viso (eds) *Distemper: Dissonant Themes in the Art of the 1990s*, Washington, DC: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1996, pp. 86–95, p. 90.

2 Charles Merewether, 'Zones of Marked Instability', in Welchman, John C. (ed.), *Rethinking Borders*, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1996, pp. 101–24, p. 104.

3 In addition to the literature cited specifically in this chapter, Salcedo has been the subject of much discussion in the art press and has been included in many major international exhibitions. A sample of this work includes Grynsztein, Madeline (with an essay by Dave Hickey), *About Place: Recent Art of the Americas*, 76th American Exhibition, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1995; Guttierez, Natalia, 'Violence and Image: Museo of Modern Art of Bogota, Columbia', *Art Nexus*, 34, Nov–Jan 2000, 114–15; *Sin Fronteras: Arte Latinoamericano Actual*, Caracas: Museo Alejandro Otero, 1997; Morin, France, 'The Quiet in the Land: Everyday Life, Contemporary Art, and Projecto Axé', *Art Journal*, Fall, 2000, 5–17; Arratia, Euridice, 'Doris Salcedo', *Flash Art*, XXXI (202), October 1998, 122; *Cocido y Crudo*, Madrid: Mueso Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 1995.

4 Merewether, Charles, 'Naming Violence In the Work of Doris Salcedo', *Third Text*, 24, Autumn 1993, 35–44.

5 Mieke Bal, paper delivered at Tate Britain, May 2005.

6 Anastas, Rhea, 'Doris Salcedo: A Tour of the Borderland of Unland', *Art Nexus*, 29, Aug–Oct 1998, 104–5.

7 This has been argued well by Sue Best, following the logic of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and Beatriz Colomina, " 'The Boundary Rider': Response to 'Battle Lines' ", in Welchman, John C. (ed.), *Rethinking Borders*, op. cit., pp. 65–70.

8 Leslie A. Adelson, 'Against Between: A Manifesto', in Hassan, Salah and Iftikhar Dadi (eds) *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading*, Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2001, pp. 244–55.

9 Rhea Anastas, op. cit., p. 2.

10 Oliver, Kelly, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

11 The works were meant to be viewed installed and in groups, rather than isolated as individual pieces. However, as I take up later in this chapter, it is possible to encounter them singly and the experience is quite distinct from that discussed above.

12 Casey, Edward, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987.

13 Edward Casey, *Remembering*, op. cit., see especially the chapter 'Body Memory'.

14 Silverman, Kaja, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

15 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968; pp. 141–43.

16 Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing*, op. cit., p. 199.

17 And there are strong Christian overtones as well – the corporeal vulnerability of Jesus dwelling in the house of his Father.

18 Gatens, Moira and Genevieve Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999; see especially pp. 65–69.

19 Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings*, ibid., p. 81.

20 Casey, Edward, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press (1976), 2nd edition 2000, p. 205.

21 Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing*, op. cit., p. 136.
22 Marks, Laura U., *Touch: Sensuous Theory, Multi-sensory Media*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p. 332
23 Glissant, Edouard, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997 (orig. 1990), pp. 183, 203.
24 Clement, Grace, *Care, Autonomy and Justice: Feminism and the Ethic of Care*, Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996, pp. 113–16.
25 Robinson, Fiona, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations*, Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview Press, 1999, p. 31.
26 Fiona Robinson, *Globalizing Care*, ibid., p. 26.
27 Benhabib, Seyla, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity, 1992, p. 8.
28 My use of the phrase 'infinity of the gift' is derived from Teshome Gabriel's evocative essay 'The Intolerable Gift: Residues and Traces of a Journey' in Naficy, Hamid (ed.) *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, pp. 75–84, in which the author describes token objects given to him by his mother and his later realisation that these had symbolized a far more profound level of generosity, never subject to return – what he then calls 'an infinite gift'.
29 Cheal, David, *The Gift Economy*, London and New York: Routledge, 1988; Schrift, Alan D. (ed.) *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, New York: Routledge, 1997. See, especially, 'Introduction: Why Gift?', pp. 1–22, for a general overview of the theory's development.
30 Derrida, Jacques, *Given Time 1: Counterfeit Money*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 1992 (orig. 1991).
31 Derrida, Jacques, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness (Thinking in Action)*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes, New York: Routledge, 2001. The book consists of an essay on cosmopolitanism and another on forgiveness.
32 Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, ibid., p. 45.
33 Paul Ricoeur, 'Reflections on a new ethos for Europe', in Kearney, Richard (ed.) *Paul Ricoeur: The Hermeneutics of Action*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1996, pp. 3–13, p. 10.
34 Paul Ricoeur, 'Love and Justice' in Kearney, Richard (ed.) *Paul Ricoeur: The Hermeneutics of Action*, op. cit., pp. 23–39, p. 36.
35 Diprose, Rosalyn, *Corporeal Generosity: On Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas*, Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2002, p. 5
36 Rosalyn Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity*, ibid., p. 75.
37 See the catalogue *Monica Nador*, Sao Paulo, Gallery Louisa Strina, 1994.
38 Mesquita, Ivo, 'Monica Nador: City Streets and Museum Walls', *Parachute*, 116, 2004, 84–93, p. 90.
39 There are a number of artists like Nador, whose work is at the limits of the conventions of community/participatory arts (e.g. Françoise Dupre, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Misha Myers, to name but a few) and there is a long history of feminist art practices that have expanded critical contexts for 'community' and 'public' work. In that sense, I am not attempting to single out Nador as a unique phenomenon, but to see her work residing at a particular threshold in this critical axis.
40 Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, op. cit.

3 Passage – transitive affects

1 Barley, Nick, (ed.) *Leaving Tracks: Artranspennine 98*, (An international contemporary visual art exhibit recorded), 1998.

2 Bone china, sometimes called 'Spode china', was an English-made fine ceramic designed to compete with Chinese-made porcelain; it was produced with ground bones, usually from cattle.

3 See Hutchinson, Kristen, 'The Body Part in Contemporary Sculpture: A Thematic Consideration of Fragmentation During the 1990s', PhD thesis, University College London, 2007 for excellent archival detail on the origin of the designs.

4 Grosz, Elizabeth, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, p. 23.

5 Haifeng made clear that he always envisaged his work as engaging with circulation between China and Europe moving in both directions, rather than traffic from one toward the other. See Brouwer, Marianne, 'A Zero Degree of Writing and Other Subversive Moments: An Interview with Ni Haifeng, undated, Online. Available HTTP: www.xs4all.nl/~haifeng/h-text-1.htm

6 Stafford, Barbara, *Good Looking: Essays on the Virtue of Images*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.

7 The plans of the house were taken from Joseph Fowles' volume *Sydney 1848* [from artist's notes on the piece].

8 Massey, Doreen, *For Space*, Los Angles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications, 2005, p. 139.

9 I discussed this at some length in chapter 9 of Meskimmon, Marsha, *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

10 Massey, Doreen, *For Space*, op. cit. p. 154.

11 Cf. Meskimmon, Marsha, *Women Making Art*, op. cit., Introduction.

12 Lomax, Yve, *Sounding the Event: Escapades in Dialogue and Matters of Art, Nature and Time*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2005.

13 See Trodd, Tamara (ed.), *Screen/Space: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010.

14 Nadia Lovell, 'Belonging in need of emplacement', in Lovell, Nadia (ed.), *Locality and Belonging*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, pp. 1–24, p. 10.

15 For a lively case study see: Anne McClintock, 'Soft-soaping empire: commodity, racism and imperial advertising' in Robertson, George, Melinda Mash, Lisa Tickner, Jon Bird, Barry Curtis and Tim Putnam (eds), *Traveller's Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*, New York and London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 132–54.

16 I am paraphrasing Doreen Massey's use of 'extroverted' here – see Massey, Doreen, 'A Global Sense of Place', *Marxism Today*, June 1991, 24–29, p. 28.

17 Ahmed, Sara, Claudia Castaneda, Anne Marie Fortier and Mimi Sheller (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, New York and Oxford: Berg, 2003, pp. 1–22 (Introduction), p. 5.

18 Ahmed, Sara, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004, pp. 45–46.

19 Ahmed, Sara, *Cultural Politics*, ibid.; Bennett, Jill, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005; Brennan, Teresa, *The Transmission of Affect*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004. Bennett argues after Deleuze on affect's contribution to critical thought, and Brennan suggests that the transmission of affect reverses Darwinian claims that the organism is the base unit of social relations – she sees socially-constituted affects as key to changing the structures of organisms.

20 Seyla Benhabib, 'Citizens, Residents and Aliens in a Changing World: Political Membership in the Global Era' in Hedetoft, Ulf and Mette Hjort (eds), *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, pp. 85–119, pp. 102–3.

21 Benjamin Lee, 'The Subjects of Circulation', in Hedetoft, Ulf and Mette Hjort (eds), *The Postnational Self*, ibid., pp. 233–49, pp. 237–38.
22 Benjamin Lee, 'The Subjects of Circulation', *ibid*.
23 Lister, Ruth, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*, New York: NYU Press, 1998, p. 42.
24 Introduction to Yuval-Davis, Nira, Kalpana Kannabiran and Ulrike M. Vieten (eds), *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, London, Thousand Oaks, California and New Delhi: Sage, 2006, pp. 1–14.
25 Nava's work was discussed at some length in the first chapter of this volume: Nava, Mica, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007, pp. 8–14.
26 Floya Anthias, 'Belongings in a Globalising and Unequal World', in Yuval-Davis *et al.* (eds), *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, op. cit., pp. 17–31, p. 27.
27 Bennett, Jill, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art*, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 69.

4 Landing – imaginative engagement

1 I am following Rosi Braidotti with this formulation; *cf*. Braidotti, Rosi, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 6: nomadism as ' … a practice of the intervals, of the interfaces, and of the interstices'.
2 Nikos Papastergiadis, 'Art in the Age of Siege' in Georgiou, Myria, Olga Guedes-Bailey and Ramaswami Harindranath (eds) Transnational Lives and the Media: Reimagining Diasporas, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007, pp. 36–40, p. 38.
3 Susan Stewart is one of the noteworthy exceptions to this tendency inasmuch as she is interested in how longing can generate subjects through narrative; see Stewart, Susan, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993.
4 I am very much indebted to my colleague Phil Sawdon for reminding me of the mythical tale of the origin of drawing – the woman tracing the shadow of her departing lover – the quintessential creative gesture generated through longing.
5 Probyn, Elspeth, *Outside Belonging*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 7–8, 13. It is significant that Probyn's argument draws upon Gilles Deleuze and Elizabeth Grosz to assert the centrality of desire as productive.
6 Lloyd, Genevieve, 'No One's Land: Australia and the Philosophical Imagination', *Hypatia*, 15 (2), Spring 2000, 26–39.
7 The consumption of difference is a common trope in contact histories marked by iniquitous power relations; see, for example, Sheller, Mimi, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
8 This wonderful term comes from the anthology Ahmed, Sara, Claudia Castaneda, Anne Marie Fortier and Mimi Sheller (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, New York and Oxford: Berg, 2003.
9 Mimi Sheller, 'Creolization in Discourses of Global Culture', in Ahmed, Sara *et al*. (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings*, ibid., pp. 273–94, p. 276.
10 Sheller, Mimi, *Consuming the Caribbean*, op. cit., p. 182.
11 Braidotti, Rosi, *Nomadic Subjects*, op. cit., p. 16.
12 Braidotti, Rosi, *Nomadic Subjects*, op. cit., p. 16.
13 Roches, Marion Pastor, 'Hossein Valamanesh: locating politics', *Art Monthly Australia*, 144, October 2001, 25–28, p. 25.
14 I am certainly not the first to note translation's potential productivity; my own interest stemmed initially from the work of Walter Benjamin, whose essay 'The Task of the Translator' was an early and remarkably sensitive engagement with just this phenomenon. Cf. Bulloch, Marcus and Michael W. Jennings, eds,

Selected Works of Walter Benjamin Vol. 1, 1913–1926, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

15 Latin has been of interest to scholars working on cosmopolitanism and linguistics, sharing with Sanskrit an intention to link together groups with disparate cultural and linguistic affiliations through a common language. That it should emerge again in this project is of note. Cf. Sheldon Pollock, 'Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History', in Breckenridge, Carol, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty (eds), *Cosmopolitanism*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 15–53.

16 I am grateful to Johanna Hallsten for taking the time to discuss the production of the work at some length with me. Any errors in the description of these processes are, of course, entirely mine.

17 There is now a good literature on the sensory alignments across cultures, ranging from Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnot's work in anthropology (cf. Classen, Constance, David Howes and Anthony Synnot, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994) to Fiona Candlin's forthcoming book (Candlin, Fiona, *Art, Museums and Touch*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

18 Braidotti, Rosi, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006, p. 277.

19 Braidotti, Rosi, *Transpositions*, ibid., p. 273.

20 Hallsten prefers the term location-specific to the more usual site-specific, for reasons she makes clear (Hallsten, Johanna, 'Sounds Like It: A Cross-cultural Conversation', *n.paradoxa*, 20, 2007, 58–63).

21 Berleant, Arnold, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992, p. 34.

22 Berleant, Arnold, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, ibid., p. 39.

23 Berleant, Arnold, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, ibid., p. 119.

24 This is the case even now in its online archival form.

25 Pratt, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 6.

26 Benhabib, Seyla, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity, 1992, pp. 5, 11.

27 *Cf.* Habermas, Jurgen, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1, trans. Thomas McCarthy, London: Heinemann, 1984.

28 Benhabib, Seyla, *Situating the Self*, op. cit., pp. 161, 168.

29 de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984, pp. 18, 30, 33.

30 Ian North, 'Living with Chai' in *Hossein Valamanesh: A Survey*, Exhibition Catalogue, Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2001, pp. 48–74 – in the context of transforming the everyday, there is an interesting account of the work's origin in Valamanesh doing the washing-up in his house in Adelaide.

31 *Cf.* Casey, Edward, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976, 2nd edn 2000; Kearney, Richard (ed.) *Paul Ricoeur: The Hermeneutics of Action*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1996; Pippin, Robert, Andrew Feenberg and Charles P. Webel, *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

32 Gatens, Moira and Genevieve Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 77, 123.

33 Braidotti, Rosi, *Transpositions*, ibid., p. 163.

34 I am using the term 'constitutive' here as Gatens and Lloyd have, and am aware that a notion of 'constitutive imagination' was formulated in Veyne, Paul, *Did the Greeks Believe Their Myths: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*, trans.

Paula Wissing, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. This sense is not unlike my use, but is not as connected to a notion of subjectivity. Finally, I am also aware of that body of political theory, drawn from anarchism, that falls under the auspices of 'constituent imagination' (cf. Shukaitis, Stevphen, David Graeber and Erika Biddle (eds), *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations/Collective Theorization*, Edinburgh, Oakland, West Virginia: AK Press, 2007). This work frequently places a key emphasis upon concrete aesthetic and poetic acts as political, and in that is akin to my thinking, but the term 'constituent' is not used in the same sense as 'constitutive' here.

35 Casey, Edward, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, op. cit., p. xi.
36 Brennan, Teresa, *The Transmission of Affect*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 11.
37 Irigaray, Luce, *The Way of Love*, trans. Heidi Bostic and Stephen Pluhacek, London and New York: Continuum 2002.
38 Irigaray, Luce, *The Way of Love*, ibid., pp. 68, 111.
39 *Cf.* Braidotti, Rosi, *Transpositions*, op. cit., p. 268: 'Cultivating the art of living intensely in the pursuit of change is a political act.'

Afterword

1 Ahmed, Sara, Claudia Castaneda, Anne Marie Fortier and Mimi Sheller (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, New York and Oxford: Berg, 2003, p. 6.
2 Deleuze, Gilles in conversation with Didier Eribon, 'Life as a Work of Art', in *Negotiations 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 94–101, p. 100.
3 Jurgen Habermas, 'Psychic Thermidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity', in Pippin, Robert, Andrew Feenberg and Charles P. Webel, *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 3–12, p. 3.
4 On this use of resonance see my essay 'Practice as Thinking: Toward Feminist Aesthetics', in Davies, Martin L. and Marsha Meskimmon (eds), *Breaking the Disciplines: Reconceptions in Knowledge, Art and Culture*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2003, pp. 223–45.

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——, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Cambridge: Polity, 2002.

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